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A History of Protestant theory of liberty in Korea, 1886-1917

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2016

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Abstract

This thesis is a historical study of the political thought elaborated by the practitioners of Protestantism in Korea between 1886 and 1917. In the study, firstly I outline a coherent line of thought which reveals a series of distinctively Protestant issues. Secondly, I argue that this line of thought was significant in constituting a theory of liberty. In elaborating this I highlight the actual historical terms of debate such as anti-Catholicism, loyalty, trade, conscience and the soul and how they relate to a conceptual formation of liberty that is religious first and foremost. This development is investigated across four chapters, devoted to the cultural, political, economic and theological aspect of this intellectual endeavour respectively.

In so doing I challenge the conventional interpretative framework that emphasises social Darwinism, church nationalism, missionary imperialism, civilisation discourse, and the separation of church and state. I explore how political thought properly contextualised is as much an exercise in religious imagination as secular rationality. The study contributes a new perspective on the question of how to relate political thought and religion, opening up a new vista from which to understand this reciprocal relationship. This account challenges the conventional wisdom of modernity as a secularising movement, and has potential implications for scholars of the period and beyond. I conclude with the theoretical implication this finding has for the secularisation thesis and consider whether the process of secularisation should be considered not so much a displacement as a permeation of theological thinking into the secular realm.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Christianity alone can save the individual and the state.

The Rev. Henry G. Appenzeller¹

What the Koreans need more than anything else is the knowledge that
all men are born equal before the eyes of Almighty God.

The Independent, 1896, December 5

Few other words in modern Korean history could generate as much vexation and hostility as the words of Henry Gerhard Appenzeller. The timing could not have been more inopportune, for in 1905 the Taehan Empire [1897-1910] – less than a decade into its existence – had just been reduced to a Japanese protectorate. The audacity of the pronouncement that Christianity *alone* could secure the salvation of the state would have jarred even the most devout of Korean believers. Sympathetic as one may be to view his declaration as nothing more than an article of faith, a sort of religious resolve necessary to withstand the imminent Japanese colonisation, modern readers cannot but sense a hint of intrusive conceit coming from a privileged American Protestant missionary blissfully unaware of the troubles ahead.

If the above comment by Appenzeller draws enthusiastic derision from some quarters, the editorial from *Tongnip Sinmun* [Kr: 독립신문; c: 獨立新聞] the first modern vernacular newspaper, below is frequently met with a silent discomfiture over the mention of the ‘Almighty God’. Why would an enlightened nationalist newspaper, unquestionably devoted to creating a modern ‘imagined

¹ Appenzeller, H. G. & Jones, G. H. (1905). *The Korea mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, New York, Open Door Emergency Commission, p.3

community', bother to introduce an element of thought potentially at variance with the modern, secular, and homogeneous goal of the nation-building project? What led the author to extrapolate the principle of universal equality by this fact of Providence which seems so out of place? But as I shall show, references to God remain not only steady and popular in the period to which the term 'Enlightenment period' (Kr: 개화기; c: 開化期), from the 1870s to the 1900s, is commonly assigned, but in fact a crucial feature which has not received adequate attention in the conventional literature.

The standard portrayal of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Korea is nearly unanimous in depicting the struggles to cope with the encounter with modernity and maintain national independence by the people and government of the Chosŏn dynasty, which was in its sixth century of existence [1392-1897]. The tidal forces that overwhelmed late nineteenth-century Chosŏn — whether the furies of unpropitious spirits of Cholera that felled the residents of the capital by thousands, the western barbarians at the gate, or the inclement heavens that unleashed famine and floods — would soon awaken the hermetic nation with a shattering touch of modernity that tore apart the Korean veil of enchantment.² The battering rams of western rationality, tightly enmeshed with the spread of global capitalism and an international system in the service of western hegemonic power, would have dissolved all that is solid.

Therefore, sympathetic though one may be for the sentiment behind the massive popular uprising that congealed into *Tonghak* [Kr: 동학; C: 東學] and the Righteous Army [Kr: 의병; C: 義兵], not to mention the sobering defeats of *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom* [1852-1864; C: 太平天國] and the Boxer Rebellion [1899-1901; C: 義和團運動] in QingChina, the standard interpretation could but lend credence to the woeful inadequacy of a popular movement out of step with the ineluctable march of modernisation.³ This was particularly true when compared to the accomplishment of Meiji Japan, as

² Evon, G. N. (2014). Tobacco, God, and Books: The perils of barbarism in eighteenth-century Korea. *Journal of Asian Studies*, v.73, pp.641-659

³ On the political thought of Tonghak, see Yi, T.-H. (1995). 1890 nyŏndae ūi sasngsajok hŭrŭm – kundae han'guk minjokjuŭi ūi najaejok kaldŭng [The conceptual flow of the 1890s – the modern Korean nationalism

well as the collapse of Qing China. The case of Meiji Japan made clear to many Koreans of the spectacular power of western science and technology, as well as the organising capacity of the modern administrative state.⁴

Corollary to this narrative of the 'opening' to the modern world is the process of secularisation, broadly understood.⁵ Indeed the rapid erosion of the 'enchantment' world view by modern secular rationality is generally thought to be the very hallmark of modernity. The dominance of secularisation thesis has been such that one commentator has noted that it 'may be the only theory which was able to attain a truly paradigmatic status within the modern social sciences'.⁶ But if the unmistakable birthmark of modernity is the gradual disenchantment of the supernatural and religious outlook of the world, it is ironic that religion took hold of Korean popular imagination precisely at the historical point when, supposedly, the intellectual credibility of religion rapidly declined in the modern world.⁷ In keeping with this broad historiographical trend, the growth of Christianity in the Korean Enlightenment period rarely registered amongst the Korean intellectual historians, confident that secularisation would take its course when the mitigating circumstances are lifted and modernisation is in full bloom.⁸

The prediction of the demise of the religious outlook of the world may have been not only premature but also has given rise to the view, both normative and empirical, of the detachment of

and its inner conflicts]. *Han'guk chŏngch'i oekyosa nonch'ong*, v.12, n.3, pp.58-63; Kim, Y.-J. (1898). *Hanmal nashyŏnalijŭm yon'gu* [A study on late Chosŏn nationalism]. Seoul, Ch'ŏngkye yon'guso, pp.184-186

⁴ Hwang, K.-M. (2000). Country or state? Reconceptualizing Kukka in the Korean Enlightenment Period. *Korean Studies*, v.24, pp.1-2

⁵ For a forceful challenge of this 'opening' historiography see Konishi, S. (2007). Reopening the "Opening of Japan": A Russian-Japanese Revolutionary Encounter and the Vision of Anarchist Progress. *The American Historical Review*, v.112, pp.101-130

⁶ Casanova, J. (1994). *Public religions in the modern world*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p.17; more recently see for variants of secularisation thesis. Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2011). *Sacred and secular: religion and politics worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.13-24

⁷ Goldmann, L. (1973). *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment: The Christian Burgess and the Enlightenment*. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp.46-47

⁸ A complete survey of *The Journal of Korean Political Thought* (Kr: *Chŏngch'i sasang yŏn'gu*), the flagship journal on Korean political thought yields only one article that deals with religion and politics in modern Korea. The same journal returns thirteen articles on the Confucian understanding of the public sphere. The flagship journal in Korean political science discipline, *The Journal of Korean Political Science* (Kr: *Han'guk chŏngch'ihak hoebo*) returns only one result dating from 1982.

religion and politics, which many mistook for the disappearance of Protestant *ars politica*. The present account challenges this paradigmatic view. By interrogating the Protestant ideology in terms of its ideational dimension, this study seeks to discern the development of Protestant political thought as it emerged in Korea between the 1890s and the 1910s. Amongst a handful of political ideas to which Protestant Christianity consistently and coherently articulated in this period, the most distinctive contribution of Protestant religion in Korea was the idea of liberty. In other words, I argue that the idea of liberty gained ideological coherence and political urgency throughout this period through the ideological lens of Protestant Christianity. By the late 1910s there emerges a distinctive Protestant understanding of what it means to be genuinely free that is as puzzling as controversial from the perspective of secular modernity. The subsequent chapters seek to clarify this line of thought that is often almost impenetrable to modern secular sensibility. Explored from four different angles – cultural, political, economic, and theological – I demonstrate as to how the Protestant vision of politics was forcefully animated and amplified by the idea of liberty, which in turn furnished the normative and conceptual coherence to a distinct brand of political Protestantism.

Some may object to this investigation on the ground that concepts as universalising as liberty in the nineteenth-century context could not escape the violence of western epistemic hegemony, and assimilate various conceptual incommensurabilities onto a plane of identity.⁹ I find this mode of analysis is inadequate insofar as it reduces the heterogeneous political contexts to part of a binary movement of dialectics between particular-universal, or core-periphery. A number of recent historical works have complicated, if not openly contested, this account by tracing the global, transnational career of ideas.¹⁰ As such, the methodology best suited for this interpretative task is

⁹ Most notably see Liu, L. H. (1995). *Translingual practice: literature, national culture, and translated modernity--China, 1900-1937*. Stanford, Calif, Stanford University Press, Chapter 1; Liu, L. H. (1999). *Tokens of exchange: the problem of translation in global circulations*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press, pp.127-164

¹⁰ See for instance, Armitage, D. (2013). *Foundations of modern international thought*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1; McMahon, D. M., & Moun, S. (2014). *Rethinking modern European intellectual history*. Oxford, Oxford University Press; Moyn, S., & Sartori, A. (2015). *Global intellectual history*. New York, Columbia University Press; Su, A. (2016). *Exporting freedom: religious liberty and American power*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press

historical contextualism of the type loosely associated with the 'Cambridge School'. I will elaborate on this in Chapter 2, whilst addressing some of the most contentious issues surrounding this mode of inquiry. Also I highlight the intellectual contexts most relevant for understanding the aims and aspirations of the missionary endeavours and the conversion experience in late nineteenth century Korea.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the contemporary Anglo-American ideological contexts and sketches the cogent intellectual contexts in which the idea of liberty began to obtain discernible ideological profile. The post-Civil War cultural context in which anti-Roman Catholicism gained tremendous prominence helped American Protestant missionaries perceive the overseas missionary enterprise as part of global struggles against the Popish plot carried out by the Catholic powers such as Spain and France. Following the westward expansion, many Protestant missionaries ascribed to the vision of American Protestantism committed to spreading the flame of republican liberty across the Pacific. The persecution of Roman Catholics from 1791 to the 1870s in Chosŏn prior to the arrival of Anglo-American missionaries served well to popularise this Protestant narrative in which Roman Catholicism and Confucianism embodied the definition of un-freedom and slavery.

Marking further embellishment on the idea of liberty, Chapter 4 describes the conjoined efforts by Philip Jaisohn and Yun Ch'i-ho who crystallised the ideological compatibility between Protestantism and liberty in the 1890s. Better known by his Korean name Sŏ Chae-p'il [K: 서재필; C: 徐載弼], Philip Jaisohn was invited back to Chosŏn by his colleague Yun Ch'i-ho following the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-5 in order to facilitate the government reform efforts. Jaisohn focused his energy on expounding a set of political ideas with a view to spark the overthrow of the incumbent monarchy. Unlike his previously failed coup a decade earlier, Jaisohn was committed to mobilising popular support behind his political programme. I outline how the first vernacular newspaper *Tonginip Sinmun*, as well as various civic associations spearheaded by Jaisohn, served as pedagogic as well as demagogic vehicles through which he disseminated the idea of radical political action. The

withering condemnation of Confucian officialdom unleashed by Jaisohn deserves the critical scrutiny not only for its intended goal of overthrowing the dynasty, but the specific rhetorical strategy underpinning his political objective. Fully evident in his editorials and public speeches from 1896 to 1898 was the efforts to make his radical message as amenable to his audience by fusing the traditional idea of loyalty with the defence of private property as a natural right. Wedded to this polemical attack on Confucian officials to whom Jaisohn put blame for popular revolts was the scandalous suggestion of the political condition of slavery.¹¹ Far from being an ideological platitude with religious embellishment, Jaisohn's articulation of 'divine right of property' owed its moral coherence to its voluntarism authorised by God, binding on all.

At the other end of the ideological spectrum was his colleague Yun Ch'i-ho [Kr: 윤치호; c: 尹致昊], whose vision of humanity was that of incorrigibility. Contrary to Jaisohn's political optimism, inspired by the Civil War and abolitionism, Yun's political moralism was framed by the harsh reality of post-Reconstruction in the South in which he spent his formative years. Yun acted very much as a reluctant counter-revolutionary, for whom the corrupt nature of mankind weighed far heavier than any revolutionary force. For Yun, man is only as free as he is capable of believing in salvation by faith alone.

Chapter 5 traces the development of the political thought of Syngman Rhee whose search for liberty combined political radicalism with the international outlook. Contrary to Philip Jaisohn, who showed very little interest in the post-revolutionary political dispensation, I contend that Rhee's searching engagement with the concept of liberty stretching from his prison to Princeton University leads to explore the moral and political significance of commercial trade and the Christian mission.

Situating his treatise on the theory of independence composed in prison around 1904 and his doctorate research at Princeton in 1910 in the framework of the development of liberal international

¹¹ Kim, S.-T. (2004). *Kaehwagi kiddokyo chŏnp'a ŭi sahoe, munhwajok ŭimi*. In (eds) *Kaehwagi han'guk kwa segye ŭi sangho kyoryu* [The Korean enlightenment period and the intellectual exchange with the world]. Seoul, Kukhak Charyowŏn, p.208

political order, the ways in which Rhee's commitment to individual right to property gradually expanded into his vision of human sociability is fleshed out. Central to Rhee's political imaginary was a concept of liberty animated by exchange and religious freedom, and the historic significance of the United States. Rhee ascribed to the United States the moral task of securing and implementing the international legal regime vital to maintenance of freedom of exchange of goods and the Gospel. What gave Rhee's vision of human sociality a forward-looking momentum was not only the normative vision of international law powered by the twin-engine of trade and Christian mission, but his image of the United States as the main protagonist bringing this world-historical process to a conclusion. Ensuring that a future Korea is fully integrated into this global order in which trade and religious missionary efforts reign supreme became a life-long question for Rhee, who spent most of his life in the American diaspora community.

Chapter 6 explores the intellectual appeal of Protestantism from the 1900s to 1910s. Conventional accounts explain the appeal of Protestantism in the 1900s thought of as mainly appealing to the need for technology and science most famously embodied in the modern medical mission works, in fact it appealed largely to the capacity for moral reform. Protestants' contention that not only science but true morality itself is inaugurated by the knowledge of God is often dismissed as hopelessly premodern and parochial, particularly in the face of modern science. Yet they took pride in their intimate knowledge of the soul, with all its intricate hydraulics of fear and longing for God, which, according to the missionaries, Confucians had long held in obscurity if not in contempt. Why this allegation by Protestants struck such a compelling chord amongst Koreans—so much so that even Korean Confucians suddenly sought to regroup itself under the banner of religion in the mould of Christianity—will be explored.

Protestant intellectuals from the late 1890s to the 1910s made concerted efforts to project the concept of liberty through a theological prism. In explaining this puzzle, I build upon the theological question of liberty triangulated by the notion of the (immortality of) soul, freedom of conscience and

natural corruption. I argue that it was the efforts to re-map the definition of liberty away from politics and onto the theological terrain that gave lasting imprint on the Protestant vision of liberty. I conclude with the suggestion that freedom of conscience was impossible to extricate from the Christian notion of the soul.

Threading the four chapters – cultural (Chapter 3), political (Chapter 4), economic (Chapter 5) and theological (Chapter 6) – are, as such, discussions concerned with what it means to be free, a concept that appears variously as the opposite of religious tyranny, political corruption, as a natural right to private property, a duty to exchange with others, and finally the providential instrument by which human souls are rescued from eternal damnation. How this series of cascading ‘moments’ reflect the sustained yet contingent efforts to articulate a clear normative vision of political Protestantism by various groups is the central question to which I now turn my attention.

Chapter 2: Literature review and methodology

The discipline of Korean intellectual history, predominantly concerned with assessing philosophic traditions, ideas, ideologies, and concepts of the past, has been a burgeoning field as of recent times. Commonly known as ‘the historical study of thought’ (Kr: 사상사; C: 思想史) or ‘intellectual history’ (Kr: 지성사; c: 知性史), the discipline has undergone specialisation into a number of sub-fields such as ‘comparative thought’ (Kr: 비교 사상사; c: 比較思想史), or ‘political thought’ (Kr: 정치 사상사; c: 政治思想史) since the 1990s.¹² Despite the growing diversity within the field, however, there is little dispute that until quite recently the discipline has been dominated by the theme of the Korean nation (Kr: 민족; c: 民族) or nationalism (Kr: 민족주의; c: 民族主義). Although the scholarly reference to the nation has become somewhat unfashionable after numerous critical interventions, it is nonetheless important to grasp the enduring relevance of the nationalist scholarship and the ways in which it still informs a number of ongoing debates.

To be precise, the investigative axes of Korean political thought were preoccupied with explaining not so much the history of ideas as giving account of the sociological categories such as the nation, capital-formation, public sphere, or modernity (or modernisation). Given the difficulty of dating these concepts, the terms of debate listed above have invited not only abuses of anachronism but also generated a set of binary categories uncondusive to actual historical scrutiny. Moreover, the interpretative principle animating much of the research – whether in the unchanging idea of the nation, the indigenous mode of modernisation, or the existence of Confucian public sphere – posits

¹² More recently see Chŏng, Y.-H. (2006). *Kŭn-hyŏndae Han'guk chŏngch'i sasangsa yŏn'gu* [The study on modern Korean political thought]. Kyŏnggi-do Sŏngnam-si, Han'gukhak Chungang Yŏn'guwŏn; Pak, Y.-H. (2008). *Chŏngch'i sasangsa* [the history of Korean political thought]. Kyŏnggi-do P'aju-si, Han'guk Haksul Chŏngbo; Pak, C.-S. (2010). *Han'guk chŏngch'i sasangsa* [The history of Korean political thought]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Samyŏngsa; Kim, H.-M. (2008). *Chŏngch'i sasangsa* [The history of political thought]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Pagyŏngsa; Sin, P.-N. (1997). *Han'guk chŏngch'i sasangsa* [Korean political thought]. Sŏul, Nanam Ch'ulp'an; Yi, T.-H. (1999). *Han'guk chŏngch'i sasangsa: Chosŏnjo chŏngch'i ch'eje wa Han'guk chŏngch'i sasang* [The history of Korean political thought: the Chosŏn political regime and Korean political thought]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Chŏnt'ong Munhwa Yŏn'guhoe

a series of a-historical fixities, for instance religion.¹³ In order to illuminate the trajectory of ideas across time and place, on the contrary, one ought to avoid such positivistic ‘givens’ and instead concentrate on the ways in which individual ideas undergo transformation over time under specific historical contexts.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into two sections: a broad-stroke survey of the nation-centric historiographical framework and the analytic challenges likely to arise in the study of Protestant political thought in Korea. This is followed by the methodological discussions relevant to challenges described.

Nationalist historiography

Any survey of modern Korean scholarship on the nineteenth century will encounter a mixture of economic stagnation, societal disequilibrium, and dynastic government breakdown, punctuated by two major international wars, numerous ‘armed interventions’ by foreign powers, countless rebellions, and the country’s eventual annexation by Japan in 1910.¹⁴ Added to the litany of all-out dynastic woes were an internal legitimacy crisis represented by the explosive growth of Roman Catholicism in the late eighteenth century, an indigenous religious movement responsible for sparking the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-5, and the anti-Japanese armed insurrections throughout the 1900s.

¹³ Kim, H.-S. (1983). The Influence of Christianity on Modern Korean Political Thought. *Korea Journal*, v.23, n.12, p.9; Yi, S.-G., & Pak, C.-H. (1971). *Han'guk minjok sasang sa taegye: 1-kwŏn* [the history of Korean minjok thought, volume 1]. Sŏul, Asea Haksul Yŏn'guhoe, p.287

¹⁴ Yi, M.-Y. (1997). Han'guk kidokkyo ūi males ūisik kwa chŏnnyŏnwangguk sasang [Eschatological tendency in Korean Christianity and millenarianism]. In (ed) Kwŏn, C.-A. *Hyŏndae Han'guk chonggyo ūi yŏksa ihae* [Modern Korean religious understanding of history]. Kyŏnggi-do Sŏngnam-si, Han'guk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, p.214. Cf. Pae, H.-S. (2012). 19 segi rŭl parabonŭn sigak. [The perspective on the nineteenth century] *Yŏksa pip'yŏng*, v.11, n.1, pp.215-253; Son, P.-K. (2012). 'Samchŏngmunran' kwa 'chibang chaejŏng wiki' e taehan chaeinsik. *Yŏksa pip'yŏng*, v.11, n.1, pp.254-279

The external forces confronting the Chosŏn dynasty, coupled with the massive social dislocation and popular mobilisation that led up to the dissolution of the dynasty, were such that many students observe that the entire nation of people spontaneously banded together in a collective, all-encompassing struggle. The rising consciousness of 'nationalism', as a result of the collective existential catastrophes, is taken to be self-evident.¹⁵

With the nation viewed as a permanent landmark around which the entire populous supposedly rallied, historical studies of all stripes had staked claims it as a privileged unit of inquiry, whether they be cultural and religious movements, modernisation process, social structure, capital accumulation, or state formation.¹⁶ Taking the nation as its principal objects of study, the business of the history of thought was necessarily conceived as identifying the unique features and specific attributes that marked the reflection and refinement of the Korean nation across history.¹⁷ Also worth bearing in mind is that much of the nationalist scholarship was tasked with combating the 'legacy of colonial historiography' in the 1960s.¹⁸

Once this emergency view of nationalist framework was in place, modernisation, patriotism, enlightenment, westernisation, and social reformism began to fit together.¹⁹ From the perspective of

¹⁵ Han'guksa t'ŭkkang p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe. (1990). *Han'guksa t'ŭkkang* [special lessons on Korean history]. Sŏul, Sŏul Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Sin, Y. (2000). *Modern Korean history and nationalism*. Seoul, Jimoondang; Sin, Y. (2001). *Han'guk minjok ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa minjok sahoehak* [the formation of Korean minjok and minjok sociology]. Sŏul-si, Chisik Sanŏpsa; Sin, Y. (1988). *Han'guk kŭndae minjok undong sa yŏn'gu* [the study on Korean modern minjok movement]. Seoul, Ilchogak

¹⁶ See Kim, O.-K., Yi, M.-S., Yun, N.-H., & Yi, W.-S. (1990). *Han'guk ŭi kŭndae sasang* [Korean modern thought]. Sŏul, Samsŏng Ch'ulp'ansa; Kim, Y.-J. (1989). *Hanmal naesyŏnŏllijŭm yŏn'gu: sasang kwa hyŏnsil* [Korean nationalism study: ideas and reality]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Ch'ŏnggye Yŏn'guso; Yu, C.-G. (2002). *Han'guk minjok undong kwa chonggyo hwal-dong* [Korean minjok movement and religious activities]. Sŏul, Kukhak Charyowŏn; Yun, S.-S., & Yi, K.-N. (2002). *Uri sasang 100-yŏn* [Our thought, 100 years]. Sŏul-si, Hyŏnamsa; Yŏngnam taehakkyo. (2000). *Han'guk munhwa sasang taegye* [General history of Korea cultural thought]. Kyŏngbuk Kyŏngsan-si, Yŏngnam Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu

¹⁷ See Kim, T.-H. (1958). *Han'guk sasang sa* [the history of Korean thought]. Sŏul, Namsandang, p.11; Yi, P.-D. (1956). *Kuksa wa chido inyŏm* [national history and the ideology of instruction]. Seoul, Ilchogak, pp.91-97

¹⁸ For an earlier debate see the 1967 special issue of *Kukche chŏngch'i nonch'ong*. Seoul, Han'guk Kukche Chŏngch'i Hakhoe, v.6; see also Yi, K.-B. (1971). *Minjok kwa yŏksa* [Minjok and history]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Ilchogak

¹⁹ Cho, T.-G. (1989). *Han'guk minjokchuŭi ŭi sŏngnip kwa tongnip undongsa yŏn'gu* [the study of the formation of Korean nationalism]. Sŏul, Chisik Sanŏpsa, pp.8-11; Kim, Y.-J. (1989). *Hanmal naesyŏnŏllijŭm yŏn'gu: sasang kwa hyŏnsil* [Korea nationalism study: thought and reality]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Ch'ŏnggye Yŏn'guso; Cho, K.-D.

Korean nationalism as an indigenous response to external shocks, the research focus has been on determining to what extent Koreans succeeded (or failed) in translating westernising ideas and practices into a form serviceable to the Korean nation.²⁰ Given the immediacy and magnitude of the national calamity, not to mention the limited access to the 'original' materials, selective and utilitarian appropriation for the pressing expediency of state-modernisation appears only reasonable.²¹ Discussions on modernisation (and to a lesser extent, modernity) have, as such, displayed a tendency to overestimate the extent to which western thought steamrolled over the existing political ideas.²² A recent summary captures this sentiment well:

The feudalistic crisis and national crisis confronting late Chosŏn compelled intellectuals to search for values in conformity with the modern, wealthy nation-state, and at the same time found a sovereign independent state. In order to realise their goal, western politics and political ideas in particular were embraced in a wholesale manner, on the basis of which subsequent political discussions were developed and systematised.²³

Whilst the ensuing debates raged throughout the 1980s as to who constituted the legitimate, modern subjective agency of this 'patriotic enlightenment activism' (Kr: 애국 계몽 운동; c: 愛國啓蒙運動), with scholars torn between the enlightened elites and the people (Kr: 민중; c: 民衆), there emerged

(2009). *Minjung kwa yut'op'ia* [minjung and utopia]. Sŏul-si, Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa, p.22. Cf. Woodside, A. (2006). *Lost modernities: China, Vietnam, Korea, and the hazards of world history*. London, Harvard University press

²⁰ Kang, C.-O. (1981). *Han'guk ūi kaehwa sasang* [Korean enlightenment thought]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Pibong Ch'ulp'ansa; Mun, C.-S. (1998). *Hanmal ūi sŏyang chŏngch'i sasang suyong* [the reception of western political thought in late nineteenth century Korea]. Sŏul, Kyŏngsŏng Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu

²¹ Han'guksa t'ŭkkang p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe. (1990). *Han'guksa t'ŭkkang* [special lessons on Korean history]. Sŏul, Sŏul Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.306-7; for the criticism of this 'derivative' nationalism amongst western scholars, see Chaterjee, P. (1993). *Nationalist thought and the colonial world: a derivative discourse*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press

²² Kim, H.-C. (2012). *Kuhanmal ūi sŏyang chŏngch'ihak suyong yŏn'gu: Yu Kil-jun, An Kuk-sŏn, Yi Sŭng-man chungsim ūrŏ; Han'guk chŏngch'ihak ūi ppuri rŭl ch'ajasŏ* [the reception of western political ideas in late nineteenth century Korea: with the focus on Yu Kil-jun, An Kuk-sŏn, Yi Sŭng-man]. Sŏul, Sŏul Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'an Munhwawŏn, p.201

²³ Mun, C.-S. (1998). *Hanmal ūi sŏyang chŏngch'i sasang suyong* [the reception of western political thought in late nineteenth century Korea]. Sŏul, Kyŏngsŏng Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, p.3

another analytic category which encompassed both: modernity and the public sphere.²⁴ The debates on modernity is well beyond the scope of this review but the tremendous interest generated by the notion of public sphere in the 1990s amongst Korean scholars in search of formative sites of modern political experience and subjectivity warrants a quick mention insofar as it had influenced ongoing discussions on the nation.²⁵ In the wake of an influential account of the modern public sphere by Jürgen Habermas, many thought the political aspect of modern subjectivity was held to reside in the public sphere, a kernel for civil society, distinct from the state.²⁶ Once the locations of public sphere, deemed structurally similar to those diagnosed by Habermas, had been variously identified in Korea, earlier debates on patriotic campaigns of ‘freeing [themselves] from ignorance, inculcating the values of modern civilisation, and realising their national rights and duties’ were recast into the transformative, universal experience of modernity.²⁷

From a different angle, Benedict Anderson’s forceful intervention squarely dates the appearance of nation to a point no earlier than the emergence of print capitalism and vernacular language against the backdrop of crumbling multi-ethnic, multi-lingual empires. This position has prompted many to argue that Korean nation is not just a modern construction, but more importantly, intimately intertwined with the subject-making efforts by the state through the linguistic homogeneity,

²⁴ For a succinct summary see Hwang, K.-M. (2000). Country or state? Reconceptualizing Kukka in the Korean Enlightenemtn Period. *Korean Studies*, v.24, pp.1-2; on patriotic enlightenment movement, see Kim, C.-G. (2002). Aeguk kyemonggi ūi yōksa sosŏl koch'al [A study on the patriotic enlightenment period historical novels]. *Taejung Sōsa yōn'gu*, v.7, pp.65-91

²⁵ Son, C.-T. (1959). *Kuksa taeyo* [A treatise on national history]. Sōul, Ŭryu Munhwasa, pp.138-139

²⁶ See Habermas, J. (1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge, Mass, MIT Press

²⁷ See most famously Kim, Y.-C. (1999). Han'guk chōngch'i wa konglonsōng (1): yukyochōk konglon chōngch'i wa kongkong yōngyōk [Korean politics and public discursive sphere (1): Confucian public politics and the public sphere]. *Kukche chōngch'i nonch'ong*, v.38, pp.63-80; Yi, T.-J., & Kim, C.-H. (2005). *Kojong Hwangje yōksa ch'ōngmunhoe* [The public hearing on Emperor Kojong]. Sōul-si, P'urūn Yōksa; Yi, C.-O. (2013). 1900 nyōndae huban'gi taechungyōnsōl ūi hwaksan kwachōng kwa yōnsōlmun ūi yangsang: yōnsōlmunchip ūl chungsim ūro [The spread of public speech and its trend in the 1900s: with the focus on the collected works on speeches]. *Sōkang inmun nonch'ong*, v.36, p.105; Chang, M.-H. (2007). Kūntaechōk konglonjang ūi tūngchang kwa chōngch'i kwōnryōk ūi pyōnhwa: tongnip sinmun sasōl ūl chungsim ūro [the emergence of public sphere and the transformation of political power: with the focus on the *Tongnip Sinmun* editorials]. *Han'guk chōngch'i yōnku*. v.16, n.2; Lee, S.-C. (2011). Tongnip hyōphoe wa manmin kongdonghoe ūi "kūntaesōng" nonūi kōmt'o [Reviewing the debates on 'modernity' concerning tongnip hyōphoe and manmin kongdonghoe]. *Sarim*, v.39, p.32; Pae, H.-S. (2013). 19-seki huban minjung undong kwa konglon [The late nineteenth century minjung movement and the public sphere]. *Hankuksa yōn'gu*, p.318

common reservoir of collective-memory, and the imagined territory. The aboriginal 'nation' did not give birth to the artificial and formalistic state, Anderson argues, but rather the imagined community of nation was fabricated by the state precisely so that it would coincide with the state.²⁸

More than anything, the combined toll of the two interventions revealed the lexical slippage belying the term 'nation'. The ambiguity of the term, in translation or otherwise, has led to the semantic bifurcation into the categories of *minjok* (Kr: 민족; c: 民族) and *kungmin* (Kr: 국민; c: 國民).²⁹ The reconciliation of the nation and state, in the backdrop of crumbling multi-lingual and multi-ethnic empires, had inspired the Korean people and the elites to come together to this project. The semantic conflation of *Kungmin* and *minjok* originating from this period, many believe, highlights the manner in which the people were called into the position of subject by the modern state.³⁰

Most significant of all, a more recent 'global' turn in the study of the history of Christianity has brought into focus the ways in which Christianity in Asia grew through a series of multi-directional,

²⁸ See translator's note in Anderson, B. R. O., & Yun, H.-S. (2002). *Sangsang ūi kongdongch'e: minjokjuūi ūi kiwŏn kwa chŏnp'a e taehan sŏngch'al*. Sŏul, Nanam Ch'ulp'an; Anderson, B. R. O. (1991). *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London, Verso; Kang, C.-H. (2012). 'Kukkŏ' kyogwasŏ ūi t'ansaeng kwa kŭndae minjokchuūi: *kungmin sohak tokpon* (1895) ūl chungsim ūro [the birth of 'national language' textbook and modern nationalism: with the emphasis on *kungmin sohak tokpon* (1895)]. *Sanghŏ hakbo*, v.36, pp.257-293; Kim, S.-H. (2013). Sinch'aeho ūi munhak e tŭrŏnan sangsang ūi kongtongch'e wa silchae ūi kongtongch'e [The imagined community and real community as revealed by the writings of Sin Ch'ae-ho]. *Hyŏndae munhak iron yŏn'gu*, v.52, pp.5-29; Cf. Sin, Y.-H. (2006). 'Minjok' ūi sahoehakchŏk sŏlmyŏng kwa 'sangsangūi kongtongch'eron' pip'an [The sociological explanation of 'minjok' and the criticism on the 'imagined community' discourse]. *Han'guk sahoehak*, v.40, pp.32-58

²⁹ For forceful rebuttals against 'the privileging the modern' see Pae, H.-S. (2014). Chŏn'gundae-kundae ūi yŏnsokjŏk ihae wa tongasia ranŭn sigak [Continuity between pre-modern ad modern Korea from the perspective of East Asia]. *Yŏksa hakbo*, v.223, pp.27-54; Pae, H.-S. (2014). Chaengjom: sŏgu chungsimchuūi wa kŭntae chungsimchuūi, yŏksainsik ūi ch'ŏnmang in'ga – Song ho-kŭn, *Simin ūi t'ansaeng* (minŭmsa, 2013) e puchŏ [point of contention: western-centricism and modern-centricism, historical consciousness – regarding *Simin ūi t'ansaeng* (minŭmsa, 2013) by Song ho-kŭn]. *Kaenyŏm kwa sot'ong*, v.14, pp.303-304

³⁰ Yun, Y.-S. (2009). 'kungmin' kwa 'minjok' ūi punhwa: *sonyŏn* e nat'anan 'sintaehan' kwa 'taechosŏn' p'yosang ūl chungsim ūro [The split between 'kungmin' and 'minjok': the representation of 'new Korea' and 'great Chosŏn' in the magazine *sonyŏn*]. *Sanghŏ Hakbo*, v.25, 79-114; Chin, T.-W. (2011). Ōttŏn sangsang ūi kongtongch'e? minchok, kungmin kŭriko kŭ nŏmŏ [What kind of imagined community? Minjok, kungmin, and beyond]. *Yŏksa pip'yŏng*, pp.169-201; Pak, Y.-S. (2008). Kŭntae ilbon esŏūi 'kungmin', 'minjok' kaenyŏm ūi hyŏngsŏng kwa chŏnkae: nation kaenyŏm ūi suyongsa [The formation of the concept of 'minjok' and 'national subject' in modern Japan]. *Tongyang sahak yŏn'gu*, v.104, pp.235-265; Kang, T.-K. (2006). Kundae han'guk ūi kungmin, injong, minjok kaenyŏm [Modern Korean concept of national subject, race, and minjok]. *Han'guk tongyang chŏngch'i sasangsa yŏn'gu*, v.5, pp.5-35; Ch'oe, Y.-S. (2007). Pak chŏnghŭi ūi 'minjok' ch'angcho wa tongwŏn toen kukmint'onghap [The creation of 'minjok' and national unity mobilised under Pak Chŏng-hŭi]. *Han'guk chŏngch'i oekyosa nonch'ong*, v.28, pp.43-73

transnational collaborations between the western missionaries in the fields, mission boards at home, and the indigenous population. Departing from the antagonistic model of metropole-periphery or the West and the rest, the analytic approach of global Christianity differs in that it seeks to pluralise the nodes of Christianity, rather than privileging the single western centre from which Christianity radiates outward.³¹

Church and nation

With the conventional historiography dominated by the category of 'nation' and modernity thus far, the place of religion in modern Korean historiography is stuck between the nationalist and modernist interpretative grindstones. This tendency extends to the sub-discipline of modern Korean political thought. A cursory survey of the nationalist literature suggests that Protestant influences were peripheral to the understanding of modern Korean thought for two reasons: firstly, Protestantism, in virtue of its unique religious commitments, did not harbour serious secular political ambitions. Secondly, Protestantism had nothing substantive to offer to Korean intellectual development except for narrowly concerning theological, spiritual, or ecclesiastical matters.

Rather, one is familiar with the innumerable charitable enterprises which the Anglo-American Protestants offered the Koreans in modern Korean historiography. By providing crucial modern amenities and often at great personal cost, as well as founding several indispensable educational and philanthropic institutions, Anglo-American missionaries have made tremendous contributions to the development of Korean modernity.³² Of note is the prevailing suggestion that the Protestant

³¹ For the study of global Christianity with the focus on Korea, see Ma, W., & Ahn, K. S. (2015). *Korean church, God's mission, global Christianity*. Eugene, Oregon, Wipf & Stock; on China, see Bays, D. H. (2012). *A new history of Christianity in China*. Chichester, West Sussex, Wiley-Blackwell; more general account is Lupieri, E., Lammers, G., Hooten, J., & Kunder, A. (2011). *In the name of God: the making of global Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, [etc.], Eerdmans; Hefner, R. W. (2013). *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st century*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

³² Paek, N.-C. (1970). *The history of Protestant missions in Korea 1832-1910*. Seoul, Korea, Yonsei University Press

commitment to the nation benefitted the entire nation, transcending the entrenched interests of social and gender boundaries. Governed by the wise principle of separation of church and state, the Protestant missionaries did their best to observe the norms of political non-interference and exercised judicious self-restraint in their evangelical activities to the level of society, always considerate of the autonomy of Korean political determination. This account is corroborated by the church, which prides itself in providing not just material amenities unavailable to Koreans prior to the 1880s but more significantly in liberating Koreans from 'the belief [that] keeps the Korean in a perpetual state of nervous apprehension' and the 'strangling of independent thought.'³³ The Protestant missionaries, by freeing people's thought, empowered the people to make their own decision.

A simple list of high-profile activists and prominent intellectuals favourable to Protestantism is a forceful reminder of the significant social and cultural contributions Protestantism made at the turn of the century in Korea. Tellingly, several well-known reformers and political activists openly prescribed Protestantism as the only means that 'could help reform their people and their nation.'³⁴ The large number of well-known figures involved in the March First in 1919 provides further credence to the impression Protestantism played in the betterment of ordinary Koreans. Church historians have argued that since the political arrangement *implicit* in American Protestantism would have been liberal as well as democratic, assuming that modern ideas embedded in the American mission had the transformative impact without being articulated as such.

This Protestant reading of modern Korean history in the 1970s generated much hostility and spirited counters from the nationalist corner committed to underscoring the autonomous and indigenous efforts of and by the Korean nation.³⁵ Since the canonical view maintains that the crisis in late

³³ Gale, J. S. (1909). *Korea in Transition*. New York, Young people's missionary movement of the United States and Canada, p. 84, 101

³⁴ Lee, T.-S. 2010. *Born again: Evangelicalism in Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, p. 32

³⁵ See Sin, Y.-H. (1976). *Tongnip Hyŏphoe wa kaehwa undong* [The Independence Club and enlightenment activism]. Sŏul, Sejong Daewang Kinyŏm Saŏphoe; Sin, Y.-H. (2006). *Tongnip Hyŏphoe yŏn'gu: Tongnip sinmun, Tongnip Hyŏphoe, Manmin Kongdonghoe ŭi sasang kwa undong* [A study on the Independence Club: idas and

Chosŏn arose as a result of the forced integration into the capitalistic world order by the western powers, Protestantism would have occupied an ambiguous position, with a tenuous allegiance to Korea at best.³⁶ Firmly locating the source of modernity within the Korean nation, nationalist historians have been at loggerheads with church historians, against whom they level charges of cultural imperialism and denying the Korean nation its historical agency.³⁷

The anti-colonial scholarship of the 1970s, further buoyed by the subsequent discussions on *minjung* in the 1980s and post-colonial literature in the 1990s, permitted the nationalists to point out the missionary complicity with colonial knowledge-production, racism and profit motives. Too often even well-meaning western missionaries behaved as though they possessed a lordship over their native flock and indulged in commercial exploits, leaving many Korean converts deeply disappointed.

activism on tongnip sinmun, Independence Club, manmin kongdonghoe]. Sŏul-si, Ilchogak; Sin, Y.-H. (2000). *Modern Korean history and nationalism*. Seoul, Korea, Jimoondang Pub. Co.; Sin, Y.-H., & Pankaj, N. M. (1989). *Formation and development of modern Korean nationalism*. Seoul, Dae Kwang Munhwasa; Sin, Y.-H. (2000). *Ch'ogi kaehwa sasang kwa Kapsin chŏngbyŏn yŏn'gu* [A study on early enlightenment thought and the kapsin coup]. Sŏul-si, Chisik Sanŏpsa; Sin, Y.-H. (1997). *Chosŏn hugi sirhakh'a ŭi sahoe sasang yŏngu* [A study on late Chosŏn practical learning thought]. Sŏul-si, Chisik Sanŏpsa

³⁶ Han'guksa t'ŭkkang p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe. (1990). *Han'guksa t'ŭkkang* [A special lecture on Korean history]. Sŏul, Sŏul Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, p.299; in this authoritative treatment of Korean history, there is not a single subheading devoted to Christianity in Korean history. Similarly there is not a single mention of Christian contribution to modern Korean nationalism in Kim, Y.-J. (1989). *Hanmal naesyŏnŏllijŭm yŏn'gu: sasang kwa hyŏnsil* [A study on late nineteenth century nationalism: thought and reality]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Ch'ŏnggye Yŏn'guso. The only exception is Yi, K.-N., & Underwood, H. G. (1992). *Ch'odae Ŏndŏudŭ sŏn'gyosa ŭi saengae: uri nara kŭndaehwa wa sŏn'gyo hwaltong* [Early Underwood: national modernisation and the missionary activities]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Yi, K.-R. (1981). *Kaehwaki kwansŏ chipang kwa kaesinkyo* [Northeast provinces and Protestantism in the enlightenment period]. In Chŏnbuk sahakhoe. *Han'guksa ŭi ihae*. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏl-si, Kŭmhwa Ch'ulp'ansa; Kim, H.-C. (2012). *Kuhanmal ŭi sŏyang chŏngch'ihak suyong yŏn'gu: Yu Kil-jun, An Kuk-sŏn, Yi Sŭng-man chungsim ŭrŏ; Han'guk chŏngch'ihak ŭi ppuri rŭl ch'ajasŏ* [the reception of western political ideas in late nineteenth century Korea: with the focus on Yu Kil-jun, An Kuk-sŏn, Yi Sŭng-man]. Sŏul, Sŏul Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'an Munhwawŏn; Mun, C.-S. (1998). *Hanmal ŭi sŏyang chŏngch'i sasang suyong* [the reception of western political thought in late nineteenth century Korea]. Sŏul, Kyŏngsŏng Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Kang, C.-O. (1982). *Han'guk kŭndaesa yŏn'gu* [A study on modern Korean history]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Hanul; Hong, S.-C. (1975). *Hanmal ŭi minjok sasang: wijŏng ch'ŏksa sasang ŭl chungsim ŭro* [National consciousness in late Chosŏn: with the focus on anti-foreign thought]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, T'amgudang; See Min, K.-B. (1974). *Han'guk minjok kyohoe hyŏngsŏng saron* [A treatise on the formation of modern Korean Christianity]. Sŏul, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Min, K.-B. (2007). *Kyohoe wa minjok* [Church and the nation]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Min, K.-B. (1975). *Han'guk ŭi Kidokkyo* [Christianity in Korea]. Sŏul, Sejong Taewang Kinyŏm Saŏphoe; Min, K.-B. (2011). *Kŭllobŏl sidae wa Han'guk, Han'guk kyohoe: minjok kyohoe esŏ kŭllobŏl kyohoe ro* [Korea and Korean church in the age of globalisation: from a minjok church to global church]. Sŏul-si, Taehan Kidokkyo Sŏhoe; for an earlier account see Paek, N.-C. (1970). *The history of Protestant missions in Korea 1832-1910*. Seoul, Korea, Yonsei University Press

³⁷ See Sin, Y.-H (1987). *Han'guk kŭndae sahoe sasangsa yŏn'gu* [A study on Korean modern sociological thought]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi: Iljisa; Sin, Y.-H (1987). *Han'guk kŭndae sahoesa yŏn'gu* [A study on modern Korean society]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi: Ilchisa; Sin, Y.-H (2005). *Han'guk kŭndae chisŏngsa yŏn'gu* [A study on Korean modern intellectual history]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi: Sŏul Taehakkyŏ Ch'ulp'anbu

Thus, whilst apparently sympathetic to the plight of the Koreans, the conduct of foreign missionaries was often egregiously at variance with the professed faith. The gap between the self-perception of the American missionaries and the 'negative stereotypes' is still alive in the literature.³⁸

In particular, the large show of support for the Japanese control over Korea following the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 embittered many natives and aroused suspicions over the complicity of the western powers in the downfall of Korea. Many foreign missionaries, in conceding that Koreans were unfit to self-govern, expressed their delight in Japan's sharing the burden of the civilising duty. James Gale, surely expressing the popular opinion, touted that '[by] accepting the Japanese Administration and doing their best to strengthen it, the Koreans might yet become a blessing to themselves, to Japan, to China, and to all the world.'³⁹

In response, church historians began to emphasise the nationalist dimension in Korean Protestantism, marking a departure from the earlier accounts that stressed the benevolence and self-sacrifice of the Anglo-American missionaries.⁴⁰ The church nationalist camp accordingly realigned the Protestant missionary works nearer the patriotic light, that 'the Protestant church was the main community aiming to change the Confucian establishment and to provide modern education and new political training'.⁴¹ According to Min, 'through the Nevius method a body of modern middle-class citizenship was formed and through the Great Revival in 1905-1907 gave rise to a modern man'.⁴²

³⁸ Underwood, E. (2003). *Challenged identities: North American missionaries in Korea, 1884-1934*. Seoul, Royal Asiatic Society-Korea Branch, p.11

³⁹ Ladd, G. T. (1910). Economic and Social Changes in Korea. *The Journal of Race Development*, v.1, n.2, p.250

⁴⁰ See Min, K.-B. (1974). *Han'guk minjok kyohoe hyöngsöng saron* [The historical treaties on the formation of Korean minjok church]. Söul, Yöñse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Min, K.-B. (2007). *Kyohoe wa minjok* [Church and nation]. Söul T'ükpyölsi, Yöñse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Min, K.-B. (1975). *Han'guk üi Kidokkyo* [Korean Christianity]. Söul, Sejong Taewang Kinyö'm Saöphoe; Min, K.-B. (2011). *Külloböl sidae wa Han'guk, Han'guk kyohoe: minjok kyohoe esö külloböl kyohoe ro* [Korea and Korean church in the age of globalisation: from a minjok church to global church]. Söul-si, Taehan Kidokkyo Söhoe

⁴¹ Pak, C.-S. (2003). *Protestantism and politics in Korea*. Seattle, WA, University of Washington Press, p.9

⁴² Min, K.-B. (2008). *Han'guk kyohoe üi sahoesa, 1885-1945*. Söul-si : Yöñse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, p.307

According to this church nationalist historiography, the Protestant missionaries arguably served as the unwitting revolutionary saints of new politics by mere fact of their presence, facilitating a departure from the antiquated political order. In this religious community the members and sympathisers were enthused into social reformism as well as evangelicalism. Besides the institutional and emotive support, church historians argued that Protestant contributions to the Korean nation were at their most enduring and meaningful on the ideational level. It is as though the Koreans would have absorbed the ideas and values that congealed into hospitals, orphanages, schools, sanatoriums, and civic centres, almost by osmosis. In short, the Protestant church and Korean reformism shared the common goal of '[changing] the Confucian society'.⁴³ Better still, their work possessed the virtue of political modesty and encouraged self-governance unlike their zealous competitors a century earlier.

The sophisticated accounts of this strand of Korean church nationalism variously examined by Kenneth Wells, Chang Kyu-shik, and Pak Chŏng-sin explore the initial foray by Min Kyŏng-bae.⁴⁴ The church nationalist historians specifically focused on the tremendous growth of Protestantism in the north. In explaining the sudden upsurge of Protestant converts, intellectual historians have asserted that the key factor behind the rapid spread of Protestantism was the presence of a large 'independent middle class' desirous of social autonomy and political enfranchisement.⁴⁵ Contending that Christian nationalism in Korea was *one* of many bourgeois revolutionary tendencies which arose in response to the series of catastrophes besetting the late Chosŏn dynasty, Chang assimilates the burgeoning Protestant movements into wider nationalist endeavours. The embryonic bourgeois, largely belonging to the incipient provincial merchant class traditionally marginalised by the Confucian literati in the capital and subject to corrupt official machinery, readily exchanged neo-

⁴³ Pak, C.-S. (2003). *Protestantism and politics in Korea*. Seattle, WA, University of Washington Press, p.128

⁴⁴ Chang, K.-S. (2001). *Ilche ha Han'guk kidokkyo minjokchu'ui yŏn'gu* [A study on Korean Christian nationalism under Japanese colonial regime]. Sŏul, Hyeon; Pak, C.-S. (2003). *Protestantism and politics in Korea*. Seattle, WA, University of Washington Press; Wells, K. M. (1990). *New God, new nation: Protestants and self-reconstruction nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press

⁴⁵ Min, K.-B. (2008). *Han'guk minjok kyohoe hyŏngsŏng sanon* [A treatise on the history of Korean minjok church formation]. Seoul, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.252-254

Confucianism for Protestantism.⁴⁶ In addition to the self-interested motive, the prosperous merchant class in the north – politically alienated and vulnerable to official corruption – was keen to ‘reform the nation’ and was drawn to an ‘egalitarian and moral’ social arrangement for this purpose.⁴⁷ In a similar vein Wells argues that by promiscuously mixing traditional neo-Confucian practices and Protestant iconoclastic mentalities, Korean Protestants forged a cultural nationalist movement which enjoyed wide appeal among people faced with challenges no longer met by neo-Confucian philosophy.⁴⁸

The profound instability in which Koreans found themselves appealed to Koreans who did not know where to turn: ‘the language of consolation, political teaching, and organization were enough to win over the Koreans, who were deprived of all freedom of speech, association, and assembly’.

According to one notable commentator the Protestant church ‘[filled] their psychological and political needs’.⁴⁹ No doubt ‘[To] any in this progressive elite, Protestant Christianity was just the kind of Western institution they had been waiting for. Some of them even came to regard the Protestant Christian movement as the only possible means for progressive reform in late Confucian Korea’.⁵⁰

On a sociological level, Pak Chöng-sin elaborates on the role of social revolution and the church’s function as a nexus for disseminating modern knowledge, arguing that despite its conservative theology, scriptural fundamentalism and pietism inadvertently supported a socially progressive programme; that missionary efforts concentrated on socially marginalised groups traditionally ignored by Confucianism; and finally, widespread eschatological beliefs were a thinly-veiled disguise

⁴⁶ Chang, K.-S. (2001). *Ilche ha Han’guk kidokkyo minjokchu’i yŏn’gu* [A study on Korean Christian nationalism under Japanese colonial regime]. Söul, Hyeon, pp. 29-45, pp.377-379

⁴⁷ Lee, K.-N. (1981). Kaehwaki kwansö chipang kwa kaesinkyo [Protestantism in north-western region during the Enlightenment period]. In Chönbuk Sahakhoe. *Han’guksa üi ihae*. Söul T’ükpyöl-si, Kümhwa Ch’ulp’ansa, p.334

⁴⁸ Wells, K. M. (1990). *New God, new nation: Protestants and self-reconstruction nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, pp.12-14, 48-61

⁴⁹ Pak, C.-S. (2003). *Protestantism and politics in Korea*. Seattle, WA, University of Washington Press, p.30

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.29

for a desire for political resolution of the real predicament.⁵¹ In the midst of the economic depression and profound social dislocation experienced by many, writes Pak, western missionaries expertly located a receptive and eager audience ‘among commoners and downtrodden people, who had not received any benefits from Confucian rule, and among some *yangban* elite who were disillusioned with the government and old values’, just as Roman Catholicism did a century ago.⁵²

Indispensable in this line of explanation is the manner in which the contemporary ideology of social Darwinism, or the survival of the fittest, helped reconcile between the harsh reality and the Christian model of Providence.⁵³ The church’s involvement in the pursuit of mammon and the complicity with western colonialism, not to mention the efforts to self-empower is thought to rest on social Darwinism.⁵⁴ The enduring significance of social Darwinism in the literature requires little elaboration. This ideology pervaded all corners of the intellectual landscape, so much so that even leading reformers and intellectuals like Yu Kil-chun (Kr: 유길준; C: 俞吉濬; b.1856-1914) and Yun Ch'i-ho (b.1864-1945) were able to confess a paradoxical belief in the natural rights of men and social Darwinism simultaneously.⁵⁵ As Yun Ch'i-ho put it, reconciling ‘the inexorable law of the survival of the fittest’ with the benevolence of God came about as a result of the condescending attitude of missionaries.⁵⁶

Despite the criticism that social Darwinism is not a political theory but ‘a series of connected assumptions and propositions about nature, time and how humanity is situated within both’, Korean historians have long understood social Darwinism as an explicit political ideology by which the

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 60

⁵² Ibid., p.108; for the reception of Roman Catholicism in Chosŏn, see Kim, H.-W. (1986). Chŏngjojo ŭi ch’ŏnjuhak pip’an [The criticisms against Roman Catholicism in king Chŏngjo period. *Han’guk chŏngch’ihak hakbo*, v.20, n.2, pp.52-54

⁵³ Wells, K. M. (1990). *New God, new nation: Protestants and self-reconstruction nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, pp.51-52

⁵⁴ Chang, K.-S. (2001). *Ilche ha Han’guk kidokkyo minjokchuŭi yŏn’gu* [A study on Korean Christian nationalism under Japanese colonial regime]. Sŏul, Hyeon, p.87, 101

⁵⁵ Yun, S.-S., & Yi, K.-N. (2002). *Uri sasang 100-yŏn* [Our thought, 100 years]. Sŏul-si, Hyŏnamsa, pp.268-271

⁵⁶ Yi, K.-N. (1969). *Han’guk kaehwasa yŏn’gu* [A study on Korean enlightenment]. Sŏul, Ilchogak, p.31; Wells, K. M. (1990). *New God, new nation: Protestants and self-reconstruction nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, p.51

society and nation were to be refashioned.⁵⁷ Much of the confusion surrounding social Darwinism derives from the conflation of the descriptive and normative lenses brought to bear by nationalist historians of both the secular and ecclesiastical worlds. For instance, when Jaisohn and others speak of the Christianisation of Korea as being coterminous with the possibility of any serious reform, these remarks are often brushed aside as a religious pretext for a sort of Darwinian imperialistic imagination.⁵⁸ One observes how social Darwinism, a descriptive theory of how society operates was taken to be a prescriptive doctrine by which to re-organise the whole of society.⁵⁹

The staggering frequency with which the term 'social Darwinism' is deployed encapsulates the interpretative problem that historians of political ideas face, namely a failure to identify a segment of thought actually concerning politics. One cultural analyst recently described the ubiquity of social Darwinism in the literature as 'the most prevailing term with which more recently Korean historians in Korea have engaged in characteristics and roles of political reformist ideas in modern Korea and their perceptions of Western powers'.⁶⁰ With social Darwinism as an analytic short-hand, critical historians found a way to make sense of how Protestant missionaries and American imperialists reconciled with one another ideologically.⁶¹

Recent works by Leonard, Hodgson, Bannister and Bellomy have called into question this exaggerated historical influence with which social Darwinism is credited. If one were to accept the

⁵⁷ Hawkins, M. (1997). *Social Darwinism in European and American thought, 1860-1945: nature as model and nature as threat*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.32

⁵⁸ See *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1896). Nonsöl [editorial], October 10

⁵⁹ For a handful of samples see Woo, N.-S. (2012). Miguk sahoe chinhwalon kwa han'guk kŭntae: Yunch'iho ūi yŏnghyang ūl chungsimŭro [American social Darwinism and Korean modernity: centred on the influence of Yun Ch'i-ho]. *Tongyang chŏngch'i sasang*, v.11, n.1; Ahn, K.-H. (1998). 1910 nyŏn chŏnhu Yisangryong ūi hwaldong kwa sahoe chinhwaron [Yi Sang-ryong's activism and social Darwinism around 1910]. *Yŏksa wa hyŏnsil*, v.29, pp.250-274; Pak, S.-J. (2003). *Hanmal-ilche ha sahoe chinhwaron kwa singminji sahoe sasang* [Social Darwinism and colonial social thought in the pre-colonial and colonial period]. Sŏul-si, Sŏnin; Chŏn, P.-H. (1996). *Sahoe chinhwaron kwa kukka sasang: kuhanmal ūl chungsim ŭro* [Social Darwinism and statism: from the pre-colonial perspective]. Sŏul-si, Hanul; Flemming, D. (1964). Social Darwinism. In Schlesinger, A. M., & White, M. G. *Paths of American thought*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin; Hofstadter, R. (1941). William Graham Sumner, Social Darwinist, *The New England Quarterly*, v.14, n.3

⁶⁰ Sung, M. (2013). Social Darwinism in modern Korea: a rhetoric of historical inquiry. *Susahak = Korean Journal of Rhetoric*, v.18, pp.143-165

⁶¹ See Tikhonov, V. M. (2010). *Social Darwinism and nationalism in Korea: The beginnings (1880s-1910s): "survival" as an ideology of Korean modernity*. Leiden, Brill

conclusions by Bellomy and Leonard that the term 'social Darwinism' was more or less a catch-all term of disparagement applied prolifically by Progressive economists and New Deal reformers to anything objectionable, such as war, imperialism, racism, and eugenics, and the laissez-faire economy, it certainly explains the ubiquity of social Darwinist ideology in nearly all the political events of late nineteenth century Korea.⁶² In particular, Bellomy found that the term 'social Darwinism', commonly associated with Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner, was used only twice before the appearance of the epoch-making account by the Progressive historian Richard Hofstadter's *Social Darwinism in American Thought: 1860-1915* in 1941 in the academic literature.⁶³ The enormous success of this book ensured that social Darwinism become largely a term of disparagement for debasing the theory of natural selection into high-minded apologetics for Gilded Age rapacity, with help from the racially-tinged speculations in Darwin's own *Descent of Man*. In the literature the fact that both Spencer and Sumner unambiguously opposed imperialism from the perspective of laissez-faire government hardly raises any scruple.⁶⁴ Nor, most tellingly, does it take into consideration that many Protestant missionaries exhibit widely differing explanations of the biological origin of men, from that of strict immanentism to catastrophism and literal creationism. For instance, Rhee Syngman believed the earth to be 4,000 years old.

As such, these accounts, though useful in giving insight as to why many intellectuals in the late nineteenth-century Korea were drawn to Protestantism from a general perspective, reveal little as to how this system of thought would have been translated into particular political aspirations or normative ideas. There is no substantive engagement with the factors that may have attracted the oppressed and marginalised class of people to a foreign religion less than twenty years after the last

⁶² Bellomy, D. (1984). 'Social Darwinism' revisited. *Perspectives in American History*, v.1, pp.1-129

⁶³ Hofstadter, R. (1944). *Social Darwinism in American thought: 1860-1915*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press; Bannister, R. C. (1979). *Social Darwinism: science and myth in Anglo-American social thought*. Philadelphia, PA, Temple University Press; Hawkins, M. (1997). *Social Darwinism in European and American thought, 1860-1945: nature as model and nature as threat*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Leonard, T. (2009). Origins of the myth of social Darwinism: the Ambiguous legacy of Richard Hofstadter's Social Darwinism in American Thought, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, v.71, n.1

⁶⁴ Leonard, T. (2009). Origins of the myth of social Darwinism: the Ambiguous legacy of Richard Hofstadter's Social Darwinism in American Thought, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, v.71, n.1, p.45

major persecution on the Catholics in 1866.⁶⁵ Nor does it demonstrate anything significant about the ways in which Christian intellectuals articulated the normative arguments, assisted by the new Protestant religion.

Secularisation

Arguably the only sociological theory with bigger impact on the assessment of the present study is the secularisation thesis which suggests that religion in general enjoyed only ever-diminishing influence in the twentieth-century.⁶⁶ The secularisation thesis posits that Christianity is a secondary order of discourse destined to be made obsolete by the arrival of secularism, capitalism, liberal politics and scientific rationality. As a result the overall impression is that religion's encroachment on secular politics is considered deeply anachronistic and objectionable by contemporary political thinkers and historians. Modern political science has decisively made a 'retreat from God', a move that inadvertently pitted religion against secularity.⁶⁷ The noted church historian Latourette suggested as much in his magisterial 1953 account, *A History of Christianity*, in which Christianity as a confessional doctrine began its long submergence by the likes of Darwin, Nietzsche, Marx, and the steam engine.⁶⁸

As "[d]emocracy", "laissez-faire," "socialism," "anarchism," and "nationalism," were expounded in the West as alternatives to Christian religion', this tendency was soon followed by indigenous intellectuals who were keen to avoid the trappings of an outdated system of thought and to leap

⁶⁵ On the so called 'Pyöngin Persecution' of 1866, see Min, K.-B. (2007). *Han'guk Kidok kyohoesa: Han'guk minjok kyohoe hyöngsöng kwajöngsa*. Söul-si, Yöñse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.94-104

⁶⁶ Kim, N. (2009) The Christian Religion's Relatedness to Ideology and Its Politico-ideological Role. *The Korean Journal of Humanities and the Social Sciences*, v.33, n.4

⁶⁷ Shklar, J. (1959). Ideology Hunting: The Case of James Harrington. *American Political Science Review*, v.53, p.684

⁶⁸ Latourette, K. S. (1953). *A history of Christianity*. New York, Harper, pp.1063-1080

forward into the promise of science and a modern political system.⁶⁹ According to one American sinologist, many nationalists agreed that East Asia could be redeemed only 'when Chinese Confucianism and Western Christianity were... consigned to oblivion', thereby reaching the promised land of modernity.⁷⁰ Likewise, pervasive intellectual condescension in the wider literature with respect to western Christian missionaries resolutely highlights 'secularism's triumph in the historiography'.⁷¹

Polarised by the secular nationalism/modernisation and social Darwinism/capitalism/imperialism prism, very little ink has been spilt on explaining the Christian languages that permeated the texts by the radicals and enlightenment thinkers. As the contextual information framing the intellectual inquiry often consists in no more than a few historical landmarks familiar to all readers, such as the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 or the annexation in 1910, one is left to evaluate the appeal of the new religion largely from a macro-sociological and/or individualistic psychological reductionism, i.e. utility maximisation or a form of negotiation tactic.⁷²

With the sociological frameworks contingent on nebulous categories such as 'civilisation', 'race' and 'nation' having prevailed in determining the content and contour of the Protestant intellectual landscape, what remains unaccounted for in the literature is the consistency and coherence with which Protestant intellectuals articulated their visions of political morality in terms of Higher Law or the Creative purpose. For all their different concerns and issues, a key attribute shared by the Protestant intellectuals is their unanimous subscription to a Christian schema of natural rights out of

⁶⁹ Palmer, S. J. (1967). *Korea and Christianity; the problem of identification with tradition*. Seoul, Korea, Hollym Corp, p.49

⁷⁰ Levenson, J. R. (1958). *Confucian China and its modern fate: the problem of intellectual continuity*. Berkeley, University of California Press, pp.117-125

⁷¹ Tyrrell, I. R. (2010). *Reforming the world: the creation of America's moral empire*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, p.34; Porter, A. (2002). Church History, History of Christianity, Religious History: Some Reflections on British Missionary Enterprise Since the Late Eighteenth Century. *Church History*, v.71, p.556. Cf. Thomson, J. C., Stanley, P. W., & Perry, J. C. (1981). *Sentimental imperialists: the American experience in East Asia*. New York, Harper & Row

⁷² Chöng, C.-S. (2005). *Han'guk Yugyo wa sögu munmyöng üi ch'ungdol: Yi Hang-no üi ch'öksa wijöng ideology* [The clash between Korean Confucianism and western civilisation: Yi Hang-no's anti-foreigners campaign ideology]. Söul, Yönsë Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, p.74; Chöng, S.-J. (1983). *Chosön hugi sahoe pyöndong yön'gu* [A study on the transformation of social transformation of late Chosön]. Söul T'ökp'yölsi, Ilchogak, pp.22-78

which arose varying normative ramifications, such as equality and justice. To the extent that the feasibility of political reforms was indexed by the spread of Protestant Christianity, we would be well served to consider the theological and ecclesiastical foundations that animated these novel forms of political thinking. Tracing political ideas from what are purported to be religious writings thus demands extra justification. The goal of the present study is to verify the existence of a coherent strand of political normative ideas embedded in and transmitted through Protestant religion.

This objective requires us to firstly demonstrate that religious texts were to a discernible extent read by the contemporary intellectuals and lay people; secondly that a number of keystone political ideas were transmitted and conveyed through Protestant texts; and finally that Protestantism in Korea had a vested interest and involvement in politics that allowed it not only to develop a distinctive internal ideology but to generate a host of normative and regulative principles applicable in the formal realm of politics in the process. In the next section I will discuss how this investigation could be undertaken on a sound methodological footing.

Methodological proposal

The meaning of a word is its use in the language.

Ludwig Wittgenstein⁷³

Untangling political ideas embedded in the mesh of Christian thought requires clear methodological guidance that explicitly distinguishes itself by its attentiveness to the contextual information and plausible individual intent. Without any *substantive* account of the individual actor on the table, the analysis of political thoughts risk becoming reductionist and conflating ideological analysis with sociological group analysis (nationalist, bourgeoisie, peasants, women, students, wage labourers, et

⁷³ Wittgenstein, L. (2009). *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, p.43

cetera). The substitution of group identity for individual thought as the object of analysis has tended to obscure the distinctions between diverse ideas, practices and aims.

The examination of political ideas in Korea has become an exercise in interrogating to what degree a particular historical conjuncture approximates the timeless ideal. National spirit thus conceived principally concerns itself with its own preservation and unity. In other words, as one historian notes, the purpose of studying history is to demonstrate the extent to which the national history conformed or deviated from the 'universal principles of historical development' so that one may unearth those developments specific to the Korean nation and those applicable to all of humanity.⁷⁴ If the unprecedented external crisis in the mid-nineteenth century thwarted the natural culmination of its historical contingency, i.e., the formation of a nation-state based on the principle of popular sovereignty, the crisis nonetheless was helpful insofar as it helped 'refine and amplify' the national ideals into pragmatic and concrete political aims in the ruins of the old regime.⁷⁵

To the extent that ideas such as nationalism 'caused' people to politically mobilise, found (and convert to) new religions, organise new communities, or prompted counter-cultural revolutionary movements, the history of political thought would merely consist of bearing witness to the intellectual unfolding of the World-Spirit itself. The conventional history of political thought commits a fallacy of equating 'idea' with 'causation' by insisting on the perennial spirit of nation at every turn. According to this view, Korean nationalism, cast as a Weberian ideal type, has a causative power to channel and define not just the popular mood but also its own intellectual articulation. Unless one belongs to a rather radical school of idealism, it is difficult to confer this power of necessary causation on ideas in themselves; indeed, ideas do not 'cause' revolutions any more than they cause physical objects to levitate. Yet the kind of reading reliant on 'timeless elements' in the form of the 'universal idea' of the nation continues to motivate a large portion of the scholarship.

⁷⁴ Yi, K. (1981). Hankuksa ūi pop'yōnsōng kwa t'ūksusōng. In Chōnbuk Sahakhoe. *Han'guksa ūi ihae*. Sōul T'ūkpyōl-si, Kūmhwa Ch'ulp'ansa, pp.60-61

⁷⁵ Kim, Y.-J. (1989). *Hanmal naesyōnōllijūm yōn'gu: sasang kwa hyōnsil* [A study on late Chosōn nationalism: thought and reality]. Sōul T'ūkpyōlsi, Ch'ōnggye Yōn'guso, p.2, 5-7

Critical of the vulgar idealism or sociologism prevalent in the study of political thought, a finer and better-calibrated methodological approach has been suggested by Quentin Skinner, whose main concern is to identify and isolate the political aim of the author in the composition of a given text.⁷⁶

As Skinner says, the problem of sociologism, whereby the individual is reduced to his professed membership in group interest—and its obverse the Great Man theory—can be mitigated by highlighting the ‘conventionality’ of the author’s thoughts precisely in order to assess the degree of their conformity or deviation.

Skinner famously urged historians to treat texts less as ‘the objectification of disembodied abstractions’ than as ‘a speech act *in* saying something’, what J. L Austin termed ‘illocutionary force’.⁷⁷ By treating ideas in terms of their ‘intended’ effects rather than as ‘causes’ for action, Skinner’s commitment to contextualist reading directs our focus toward the issue of the pragmatics of a text and away from its semantics: ‘[I]f we are to write the history of ideas in a properly historical style, we need to situate the texts we study within such intellectual contexts and frameworks of discourse as enable us to recognise what their authors were *doing* in writing them.’⁷⁸ Ideas are not just disembodied abstractions that cause actions but acts of enunciation by which meanings are given ‘to that action and defining and delimiting it.’⁷⁹ Put another way, by rejecting the view of ideas or beliefs as ‘causes or effects of social forces’ in themselves, intellectual historians should question ‘what the ideas did in a specific situation and why the historical participants used particular ideas in the way they did.’⁸⁰ By evaluating what actors tried to do in deploying words, rather than simple semantics, which is essentially the analysis of the ordering of words reducible to the principles of grammar, Skinner and others demonstrated the importance of the intentionality and conventionality in the interpretation of the history of political ideas.

⁷⁶ Skinner, Q. (1969). Meaning and understanding in the history of ideas. *History and Theory*, v.8, p.30; cf. Gadamer, H. G. (2006). *Truth and Method*. Continuum, London

⁷⁷ Jones, R. A. (1981). Review Essay: On Quentin Skinner. *American Journal of Sociology*, v.87, n.2, p. 456

⁷⁸ Skinner, Q. (2002). *Visions of Politics, vol.1: Regarding Method*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.vii

⁷⁹ Wood, G. S. (1979). Intellectual history and the social sciences. In (eds) Highham, J., & Conkin, P. *New Directions in American Intellectual History*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, p.35

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.36

What follows from Skinner's singular emphasis on authorial intentionality is a focus on the rhetorical and linguistic conventions that circumscribe and confer social and political meaning to statements within a given text. The intentionality *in* saying and performing a given speech act can gain purchase only if it is reasonably intelligible and coherent to others to whom the message is directed. Insofar as it is coherent, in other words, authorial intention presupposes an audience to whom it attempts to reach out. Assessing the political significance of ideas demands us to shed light on the specific contexts – intellectual, political, social and religious – in which these ideas and words are deployed, the practical ends and the audience to which they are directed, as well as the degree to which they conform to or deviate from pre-existing rhetorical tradition.

Thus, the key to the successful application of methodological individualism lies precisely in emphasising the *contextuality* and *conventionality* of individual thinkers and actors. Political writings have to be situated in the proper historical and social context in which the author operated and in which they were understood by the contemporaries to whom he sought to transmit his ideas and give his ideas greater purchase. The necessity of illocutionary (*pragmatics* or what he tried to achieve by what he said/wrote) over locutionary (*semantics* or what he said/wrote) understanding applies here, which allows one to understand the *conventionality* of the author's thought, as well as the nature of the author's ideological innovations. The centrality of pragmatics over semantics is important in that it reveals the historicity of individual intentionality against the backdrop of historically specific conventions.

Thus highlighting the historical *situatedness* of a given text involves rigorous examination of the authorial intention behind the composition of a text which, in turn, sheds light upon the conventional intellectual framework governing and constraining the rhetorical conventions. By exhaustively researching all texts available can learn the linguistic and rhetorical resources of a

particular period.⁸¹ Echoing Skinner, John Pocock similarly argues that the primary task of historians of political thought is ‘that of identifying and reconstructing such languages and mutations over time’, namely the conventionality of one’s thought in signifying the message.⁸² The acute awareness of epistemological (conventionality) and pragmatic (authorial intention) conditions circumscribing any texts equips historians with a powerful tool to interrogate historical texts. Following from this, as Kloppenborg recently stressed, the emphasis on authorial intention and discursive conventionality also demonstrate ‘the myriad ways in which texts can be and have been misread’, with meanings unintended by the author invariably projected onto the text.⁸³

This individualistic action/thought gains analytic cogency against the backdrop of the societal convention in focus. The Skinnerian approach situates the text ‘in its linguistic or ideological context’, or as he has heuristically termed it, ‘the convention’.⁸⁴ The history of political ideas could be carried out partly linguistically, the so-called *linguistic constitution of politics*. It could be remedied by examining the conventionality of writings under question. As James Farr puts it ‘conceptual change is in large part to understand political change, and vice versa. And such understanding must of necessity be historical’.⁸⁵ Farr argues that conceptual changes occur as a result of ‘limits of human intentionality and rationality’ in a given historic situation (25) and holds that political changes occur as a result of conceptual change.

In contrast to nationalist historians who assume that ideas travel across time and space without their timeless ideational significance being affected – say the transmission of the Puritanical

⁸¹ But see Mew, P. (1971). Conventions on Thin Ice. *Philosophical Quarterly*, v. 21, pp.352-56; Tarlton, C. D. (1973). Historicity, Meaning and Revisionism in the Study of Political Thought. *History and Theory*, v.12, pp.307-28

⁸² Hampsher-Monk, I. (2001). The History of Political Thought and the Political History of Thought. In (eds) Castiglione, D., & Hampsher-Monk I. *The History of Political Thought in National Context*. Cambridge University Press, p.163

⁸³ Kloppenborg, J. (2012). Thinking historically: a manifesto of pragmatic hermeneutics. *Modern Intellectual History*, v.9, n.1, p.204

⁸⁴ Tully, J. (1983). The pen is a mighty sword: Quentin Skinner’s analysis of politics. *British Journal of Political Science*, v.13, n.4, pp.491-2

⁸⁵ Farr, J. (1989). Understanding conceptual change politically. In (eds) Ball, T., Farr, J., & Hanson, R. *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 24-25

eschatological theology of the seventeenth-century Massachusetts Bay settlers via Jacksonian America to late Chosŏn merchants – the methodology outlined above would draw attention to ‘the political point a text serves in its political context and the author’s political point in writing it.’⁸⁶ The history of political ideas or thought observable in political writings can thus be meaningfully analysed by being separated into three distinct components: acts of speech or writing; the availability of linguistic and rhetorical convention that structures the speech-writing; and the wider reception and accommodation of the expressed opinion, which reconstitutes the inherited convention itself.⁸⁷ When those components are adequately understood, the manner in which certain writings or speech seek to ‘legitimate certain social action’ becomes much more clear as they operate in the political and social environment.⁸⁸ As Pocock succinctly puts it, historians of political thought are engaged in the explication of subjective meaning; that is to say intellectual historians are ‘interested in what an author “meant” and in what a text “meant” to actors in history’.⁸⁹ The illumination of the political reasons for which writers operate within particular rhetorical conventions in particular moments and places will thus govern the inquiry conducted in the subsequent chapters.

One could raise a number of possible objections to the chosen methodology in the context of this thesis, not least that some of the texts under scrutiny are undoubtedly documents dealing with theological or ecclesiastical issues bearing little obvious relevance to politics.⁹⁰ To treat religious texts as containing political intent may seem incoherent if not unduly presumptuous. Yet, to the dismay of modern intellectual historians, the historical actors examined in the following chapters show no qualms about mixing politics and religion. Nor were the responses to the political crisis leading up to the annexation uniform across the Protestant groups.

⁸⁶ Tully, J. (1983). The pen is a mighty sword: Quentin Skinner’s analysis of politics. *British Journal of Political Science*, v.13, n.4, p. 490

⁸⁷ Pocock, J. A. (2008). Theory in History: problems of context and narrative. In (eds) Dryzek, John S., Honig, B., & Phillips, A. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.168

⁸⁸ Tully, J. (1983). The pen is a mighty sword: Quentin Skinner’s analysis of politics. *British Journal of Political Science*, v.13, n.4, pp.491

⁸⁹ Pocock, J. A. (2008). Theory in History: problems of context and narrative. In (eds) Dryzek, John S., Honig, B., & Phillips, A. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.168

⁹⁰ For an alternative view on the interpretation of history see Gadamer, H.-G. (2006). *Truth and method*. London, Bloomsbury Academic.

Scholars such as Lydia Liu have contended that owing to cultural incommensurability no normative ideas can travel without being triangulated by another 'language'.⁹¹ No doubt the absence of a body of normative vocabularies serving as an ideological coordinates has prompted the analysis over-emphasising the translated (or triangulated) semantics of political vocabularies. In such an absence, Christian texts present a complex set of political issues embedded in the language of Protestant Christianity as an organised religion with its own institutions, from which Koreans would undoubtedly have drawn organisational and sociological lessons. Instead of this semantic approach I will focus on the pragmatics of this language by reconstructing the language used in past political society and investigating the actors that used this language to perform particular discursive acts and the acts they performed.⁹² The normative claims that emerge from this help to understand political ideas.

To imply that the introduction of Protestantism or the 'Protestantisation' of political thought in Korea is analogous to theologisation or 'politicisation' is to miss sight of the incredibly rich intellectual landscape that was developing at this time. It is necessary to emphasise that by conducting analysis of 'political thought' I do not mean to construe political in contradiction to economic or some other form of thought, that is, to accord politics an ontological primacy.⁹³ Nor did Korean thinkers harbour any suspicion that their knowledge would be made obsolete by another form of knowledge, i.e. the advent of scientific knowledge. Acutely alert to the implication of new ground for knowledge, new history and new political possibility, Korean thinkers and actors found much political inspiration from Protestantism, whether its reference to Biblical antiquity, the soul, or

⁹¹ See Liu, L. H. (1995). *Translingual practice: literature, national culture, and translated modernity - China, 1900-1937*. Stanford, Calif, Stanford University Press; Hart, R. (1999). Translating the untranslatable: from Copula to incommensurable worlds. In (ed) Liu, L. H. *Tokens of exchange: the problem of translation in global circulations*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press

⁹² Tully, J. (1988). *Meaning and context: Quentin Skinner and his critics*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press; Pocock, J. G. A. (1985). *Virtue, commerce, and history: essays on political thought and history, chiefly in the eighteenth century*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1

⁹³ Cf. Schmitt, C. (2007). *The concept of the political*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, p.xvi

new political virtues utterly incongruous with conventional Confucianism or Roman Catholicism.⁹⁴

Protestantism promised freedom in this world as much as salvation in the next, the analysis warrants this approach. And to the extent that a significant number of thinkers and actors, both Anglo-Americans and Koreans, refer to Protestantism as an unambiguous moral resource and ethical template for political action, one ought to be able to reasonably identify a distinctive segment of thought that informed political ideas or actions as consistent with the divine teachings. In so doing one can gradually trace the more glacial movements of political thought in the development of republicanism, a liberal understanding of property, and international law. The intellectual concerns of these thinkers were demonstrably related to their multiple surrounding political and intellectual contexts. This is the analytical challenge to which my dissertation hopefully rises.

⁹⁴ Kim, H. (2012). *Kuhanmal ŭi sŏyang chŏngch'ihak suyong yŏn'gu: Yu Kil-chun, An Kuk-sŏn, Yi Sŏng-man ŭl chungsim ŭro* [A study of late Chosŏn reception of western political thought: with the focus on Yu Kil-chun, An Kuk-sŏn, Yi Sŏng-man]. Sŏul, Sŏul Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, p.249

Chapter 3: From Christian republicanism to disestablishment

The conventional Korean historiography marks the influx of Anglo-American missionaries in the 1880s with the beginning of political modernit(ies). Entering into diplomatic relations with the United States of America in 1882 ushered Chosŏn into a fast-evolving international society, unmooring the kingdom from the Qing sphere of influence and the Sino-centric order.⁹⁵ The diplomatic treaty between the Chosŏn dynasty and the United States arguably inaugurated for Korea a new era both in terms of its foreign relations as well as domestic efforts to reform the nation in line with modern, western models. Democracy, freedom of the press, humanitarianism, liberalism, parliamentary institutions, science and other 'benign' western ideas undoubtedly made their first public appearance largely with the support of the Anglo-American missionaries. Hospitals, schools, sanatoriums, orphanages, publishing houses and others, many of which bear the original name to this day, functioned as the main conduit through which western practices and ideas flowed in the absence of the requisite expertise, capital, personnel and determination on the part of the indigenous authority.

Although sometimes sullied with racialistic paternalism unbecoming of the Christian banner, American Protestant missions by and large are perceived as the harbinger of modernity and Christian benevolence personified.⁹⁶ The dominant view holds that, as such, the Protestant church sought to 'by means of progress and enlightenment, save the country'.⁹⁷

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⁹⁶ See Paek, N.-C. (1985). *Han'guk kaesin'gyosa: 1832-1910* [The history of Korean Protestantism: 1832-1910]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Kim, C.-Y. (1997). Han'guk Kidokkyo ka han'guk kŭndaehwa ūi kach'ikwan hyŏngsŏng e mich'in yŏnghyang [The impact of Korean Protestantism in the formation of Korean modernisation values]. *Jangsin nondan*, v.13, pp.239-269; Pak, U.-K. (2003). Han'guk yŏsŏng ūi kŭndaehwa wa kidokkyo ūi yŏnghyang [Modernisation of Korean women and the impact of Protestantism]. *Han'guk chŏngch'i oekyosa nonch'ong*, v.25, pp.31-56; Wells, K. M. (1990). *New God, new nation: Protestants and self-reconstruction nationalism in Korea 1896-1937*. Honolulu (USA): University of Hawaii Press, pp.29-32; for the Protestant modernity discussions, see Ryu, T.-Y. (2003). Chongkyo wa kŭntaesŏng: kaesin'gyo e taehan kaehwagi chisikintŭl ūi t'aeto wa kŭntaesŏng munche [Religion and modernity: enlightenment intellectuals' attitudes regarding Protestantism and the problem of modernity]. *Chongkyo munhwa pip'yŏng*, v.4, pp.33-70. For a general account of missionary paternalism, see Hall, C. (2002). *Civilising subjects: Metropole and colony*

If some 'modern' institutions and ideas found the sanctuary under the roof of Christian mission organisations – a contentious fact between modern church and nationalist historians in Korea to this day – the American religionists in Chosŏn did not, at least initially, sense a pinch of irony between the so-called modern rationality, commerce, and the Gospel. Whether by design or not, there is little doubt that the Anglo-American Protestant missions in Chosŏn placed as much emphasis on the material improvement of the Korean lives as much as the spiritual well-being, often in contrast to a more pastoral approach by the Roman Catholics. For the Protestant missionaries delivering the heathens from the life of sinfulness would be expedited not by the self-evidence of Christianity alone, but with the helping hand of capitalism or science. The evangelical theology of Providence exuberantly fused the missionary zeal and commercial imperative for many North Atlantic audiences.⁹⁸ Echoing the proclamation of the Rev. Samuel Wilberforce that the Almighty Creator endowed us with the desire for commerce 'to promote *the intercourse and communion* of one race with another', for many commercial capitalism and civilisational discourse was a God-given instrument to spread the Gospel to all corners of the globe.⁹⁹

In fact there was no shortage of challenges to this marriage of convenience in Chosŏn as American missionaries found themselves increasingly entangled with *realpolitik*, mammon and intransigent natives.¹⁰⁰ As the regional power struggle over the control over Korea intensified, the confidence of

in the English imagination, 1830-1867. Cambridge, Polity; Burton, A. M. (1998). *At the heart of the Empire: Indians and the colonial encounter in late-Victorian Britain*. Berkeley, University of California Press; Pratt, M. L. (1991). *Imperial eyes: Travel writing and transculturation*. London, Routledge

⁹⁷ Chu, C.-Y. (1981). Hanmal kidokkyoin ūi chachu, minkwŏn ūisik [The thoughts on civic rights and independence held by late Chosŏn Korean Protestants]. *Sinhak yŏn'gu*, v.23, p.245

⁹⁸ See Stanley, B. (1983). 'Commerce and Christianity': Providence Theory, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842-1860. *The Historical Journal*, v.26, pp.71-94; Stanley, B. (2001). *Christian missions and the enlightenment*. Grand Rapids, Mich, W.B. Eerdmans Pub, Chapter 1; Comaroff, J., & Comaroff, J. (1986). Christianity and colonialism in South Africa. *American Ethnologist*, v.13, pp.1-22; Tyrrell, A. (1978). Making the Millennium: the Mid-Nineteenth Century Peace Movement. *The Historical Journal*, v.21, pp.75-95

⁹⁹ Wilberforce, S. (1874). *Speeches on missions*. London, W.W. Gardner, pp.176-7; Stanley, B. (1983). 'Commerce and Christianity': Providence Theory, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842-1860. *The Historical Journal*, v.26, p.72

¹⁰⁰ Min, K. (2008). *Han'guk minjok kyohoe hyŏngsŏng saron* [The history of the formation of the Korean nationalistic church]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, p.24; for a critical assessment see Harrington, F. H. (1944). *God, mammon, and the Japanese; Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American relations, 1884-1905*. Madison, Wis, The University of Wisconsin Press

western mission efforts increasingly gave way to doubts. A disillusioned student of mission in 1934 wryly thus observed: 'assuredly the church should wholeheartedly encourage in every practical way the improvement of existing harmful conditions, but it should not allow these special efforts to obscure its more fundamental social mission – the production of right social attitudes and the encouragement of its members courageously and intelligently to make the best of hard situations from which there is no immediate escape'.¹⁰¹

Much of the interpretative disagreement regarding the global Protestant missions in the nineteenth and twentieth century is over the theme of western paternalism, imperialism and capitalism on the one hand (now virtually all disclaimed), and nationalism and modernity championed by the nationalist corner on the other. The combination of nationalism, racism, imperialism and capitalism cannot fully supply the motives for tremendous variations in the missionary political orientations. Civilising discourse *does* give credence to the paternalistic assumptions and Victorian racism common amongst the western missionaries, but it fails to address a number of issues, not least substantive political disagreements, denominational strife, or attitudinal differences within the wider missionary community.¹⁰² Suspended along the interpretative axes of politics and theology, the existing literature is exhausted by the theological debates on the one hand (liberal or evangelical) and political ideologies (imperialism and capitalism versus Christian humanitarianism), on the other in explaining the behavioural, theological, and ideational dimension of Anglo-American missionaries.¹⁰³ Finally, subject to the exacting standards of a pro-Japanese or pro-Korean attitudinal binary, many a missionary betrayed an outlook at odds with the nationalist matrix. Evident frustration with the existing analytical framework has increasingly led scholars to integrate feminist and postcolonial critiques and fruitfully interrogated the formative sites of subjectivity, political

¹⁰¹ Wasson, A. W. (1934). *Church growth in Korea*. New York, International missionary council, p.143

¹⁰² See Oak, S. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876-1915*. Waco, Baylor University Press, pp.7-9

¹⁰³ See Oak, S. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876-1915*. Waco, Baylor University Press, pp.4-12

agency and interaction between missionaries and locals. They expanded the parameter of analysis in such a way as to formulate the 'Christian modernity' scholarship.¹⁰⁴

Submerged under the debates outlined above, the political dimension of the American mission ideology in this period, heavily adorned with the ideas of morality, virtue and liberty, has attracted relatively little or no scholarly attention. Many leading Korean thinkers and activists clearly thought of Protestant Christianity as an ideational source of national greatness in countries like the United States or Great Britain. Most important of all, for many converts the ideational rupture afforded by the Christian religion concerned the mode of a novel regulation between public morality and government. Therefore, in order to grasp the dictates of Protestant political thought governing the church-state relationship, one must grapple with the ideological landscape of mid-century American religious thought which had as its foundation the concept of civil religion and religious liberty. Bearing in mind that for much of the nineteenth century in America, the model relationship between church and state was not that of strict separation of religion and state as many Korean church historians casually insist, but that of a godly republic in which private conscience called for public and outward manifestation.¹⁰⁵ Indeed framing the missionary endeavours of this period simply in terms of imperialistic ambition is called into question by the extensive American domestic mission efforts since the 1840s whose chief aim was to '[pool] Protestant efforts to offset the gains of Roman Catholic Church' in the United States.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ See Choi, H. (2009). *Gender and mission encounters in Korea: new women, old ways*. Berkeley, University of California Press

¹⁰⁵ Davis, D. B. (1962). The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought. *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, v.49, pp.209-230; Ryu, T.-Y. (2004). *Kaehwagi Chosŏn kwa Miguk sŏn'gyosa: chegukkuŭi ch'imnyak, kaehwa chagang, kŭrigo miguk sŏn'gyosa* [Enlightenment Chosŏn and American missionaries: imperialistic aggression, enlightened self-empowerment, and American missionaries]. Sŏul, Han'guk Kidokkyo Yŏksa Yŏn'guso, p.103

¹⁰⁶ Kuhns, F. I. (1959). *The American Home Missionary Society in relation to the antislavery controversy in the Old Northwest*. Billings, Montana, pp.47-48; for a general discussion see Billington, R. A. (1935). Anti-Catholic Propaganda and the Home Missionary Movement, 1800-1860. *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, v.22, pp.361-384; Davis, D. B. (1960). Some themes of counter-subversion: an analysis of anti-Masonic, anti-Catholic, and anti-Mormon literature. *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, v.47, pp.205-224

I argue that the most compelling intellectual context for understanding the American mission's political outlook in nineteenth century is that which concerns the idea of liberty possible only in the context of the Christian republic.¹⁰⁷ The intellectual contribution by American missionaries in the late Chosŏn rested precisely on this dynamic and changing relationship between politics and religion, and the concept of religious liberty owing to the fast-rising Roman Catholic demographic which was the single largest religious group by the mid-century America.¹⁰⁸ In the following section I will give a brief historical account of Christian republicanism in the United States, and explain how American missionaries successfully facilitated the cultural transposition of Christian republicanism and sectarian ideology onto the late Chosŏn intellectual landscape.

Christian Republicanism in Mid-nineteenth Century America

[T]he natural union of Christianity and republicanism make it
the imperative duty of the Christian to exert his influence
to sustain the institution of his country.

Benjamin Franklin Tefft¹⁰⁹

Penned at the height of the controversy over slavery about to fracture the American Methodist Church, the Rev. Tefft's assertion that Christianity was constitutive of the 'genuine and lasting virtue' of the American republic poses an incongruous puzzle to the students of American modern Protestantism for whom the habits of church-state separatism were ingrained. Yet Tefft's appeal to republican institution is unmistakable. The essential unity of 'piety and patriotism' is inspired by the

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter 6 *passim*

¹⁰⁸ For the most comprehensive view of this see Hamburger, P. (2002). *Separation of Church and State*. Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press

¹⁰⁹ Tefft, B. F. (1841). *The republican influence of Christianity: a discourse delivered on occasion of the death of William Henry Harrison, at Bangor, April 22, and re-delivered at Hallowell and Augusta, May 14, 1841, being the day of the national fast*. Bangor, [publisher not identified], p.13

combination of 'the republican principles of the bible and the irresistible mental aspiration to liberty'.¹¹⁰ To the extent that 'Christianity is the soul' of the American body-politic, the Methodist divine argued that a genuine republic therefore signified the unity of religion and politics, a Platonic identity of spirit and matter.¹¹¹

Tefft's assertion that a republic faces sure extinction without Christian spiritual supervision, deeply reminiscent of the republican political thought of seventeenth-century England or Germany, appears out of step with the mid-nineteenth century America.¹¹² After all, in the age of Enlightenment in which the Bible was supposedly traded in for 'Reason' and liberal capitalism eclipsed Protestant Christianity as the ethical principle of political and social order, the funerary sermon heavily laden with a civic republican language may appear purely ornamental. But Christian republicanism, dating back to the time of the pilgrim settlers survived the vicissitudes of nineteenth-century American history and remained a powerful source of political imagination.¹¹³ A number of studies instructive of the extent to which the transatlantic tradition of republicanism enjoyed continuing ideological purchase in nineteenth-century America have complicated what was previously seen as an uncomplicated ascendancy of liberal-capitalism.¹¹⁴ It should be noted that virtually all of the political

¹¹⁰ Tefft, B. F. (1841). *The republican influence of Christianity: a discourse delivered on occasion of the death of William Henry Harrison, at Bangor, April 22, and re-delivered at Hallowell and Augusta, May 14, 1841, being the day of the national fast*. [Bangor], [publisher not identified], p.18

¹¹¹ Tefft, B. F. (1841). *The republican influence of Christianity: a discourse delivered on occasion of the death of William Henry Harrison, at Bangor, April 22, and re-delivered at Hallowell and Augusta, May 14, 1841, being the day of the national fast*. [Bangor], [publisher not identified], p.3

¹¹² See Schilling, H. (1991). *Civic Calvinism in Northwestern Germany and the Netherlands: sixteenth to nineteenth centuries*. Kirksville, Mo, Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, pp.95-98

¹¹³ See Griffis, W. E. (1898). *The Pilgrims in their three homes, England, Holland, America*. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin and Co. See also Rickey, R. E., & Jones, D. G. (1974). *American civil religion*. New York, Harper & Row; Cherry, C. (1998). *God's new Israel: religious interpretations of American destiny*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press; Tuveson, E. L. (1968). *Redeemer nation: the idea of America's millennial role*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press

¹¹⁴ The liberal ascendancy thesis was of course most forcefully formulated by the Progressive historians. See Hartz, L. (1955). *The liberal tradition in America; an interpretation of American political thought since the Revolution*. New York, Harcourt. See also Kloppenberg, J. T. (2001). In Retrospect: Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America*. *Reviews in American History*, v.29, pp.460-476. For the republican narrative, see Shalope, R. E. (1972). Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography, *William and Mary Quarterly*, v.29, pp.49-80; Ross, D. (1979). The Liberal Tradition Revisited and the Republican Tradition Addressed. In (eds) Higham, J., & Conkin, P. K. *New Directions in American Intellectual History*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, pp.116-31; Kerber, L. K. (1985). The Republican Ideology of the Revolutionary Generation. *American Quarterly*, v.37, pp.474-495

rhetoric, be it moral or practical, concerning religion in America in the nineteenth century was to a large extent fashioned in this mould of republican languages. The Protestant ideological commitment to a republican form of government, famously recorded by Alexis de Tocqueville found its popular expression during the Jacksonian period of the 1830s and 40s when America vigorously expanded into the West. Whilst civic republicanism gradually suffered decline in its theoretical coherence and practical applicability due to changes in national economy and territorial span, rapidly expanding denominations such as Methodism and Baptism continued to retain republicanism in their ideological palettes and cast themselves as the spiritual and moral guardian of the republic, thereby inaugurating a Christian vision of republicanism.¹¹⁵ As Thomas Smyth proclaimed in his *Ecclesiastical Republicanism* in 1843 '[the] doctrine of Christianity breathes the spirit of republicanism'.¹¹⁶ The evidence of the Protestant church as a net multiplier of the republican ideology has been noted in the recent literature.¹¹⁷

The moral foundation of the United States of America was fundamentally enmeshed with religion as a public issue not to be relegated to a dim domain of private judgment as many Korean church historians contend.¹¹⁸ Again, as Smyth put it, 'it requires every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind, and thus to be able to give a reason of the hope that is in him, to everyone that asketh it', empowering believers with the duty to not only interpret but to *execute* the divine law.¹¹⁹ According to this schema the virtue of liberty as a means to encourage everyone to search for true faith is at the heart of Christian republicanism. As such the 'republican language' in the Christian political thought during the nineteenth century in America proved a tremendously fertile ground for the

¹¹⁵ Kloppenberg, J. T. (1987). The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse. *The Journal of American History*, v.74, p.29

¹¹⁶ Smyth, T. (1843). *Ecclesiastical republicanism, or, The republicanism, liberality, and catholicity of presbytery, in contrast with prelacy and popery*. Boston, Crocker and Brewster, pp.38-39

¹¹⁷ Dillon, T. L. (1987). *Jedidiah Morse's Christian Republicanism: Reform and the young nation*. Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I. (303637761).

(<http://search.proquest.com/docview/303637761?accountid=9851>)

¹¹⁸ See most recently, Chang, S.-M. (1999). Kündae munmyöng iranün irüm üi kaesinkyo [Protestantism in the name of modern civilisation]. *Yöksa pip'yöng*, v.46, p.258. Cf. Hatch, N. O. (1989). *The democratization of American Christianity*. New Haven, Yale University Press, Chapter 2

¹¹⁹ Smyth, T. (1843). *Ecclesiastical republicanism, or, The republicanism, liberality, and catholicity of presbytery, in contrast with prelacy and popery*. Boston, Crocker and Brewster, p.42

evolving relationship between church and state.¹²⁰ Christian republicanism in this sense is a continuation of the English Civil War aspirations of Christian fulfilment in the perfection of human relations: the individual capacity to discover God without priestly intercessions and as such the possibility of every citizen to obtain salvation by his or her own endeavours.

The long train of the North Atlantic republican tradition had thus travelled through the Protestant missionary route.¹²¹ And along with it arrived the historico-cultural baggage of Anglo-American Protestantism. The moral vigilance against tyranny and corruption, and safeguarding civic virtues for the American republic, however, confronted two powerful adversaries in the first-half of the nineteenth century America: the allegations of pro-slavery and Roman Catholic popery, to which abolitionism and nativism arose in response. For many the welfare of the republic was mortally prejudiced by the institution of slavery and the presence of the Roman Catholic Church.¹²² If the existence of slavery sanctioned the erosion of liberty and undermined the principle of equality from within, Roman Catholicism posed the foreign plot to subvert the republic and impose the sacerdotal absolutism from without. Abundantly evident in the mid-century American Protestant literature are the ideals of virtue heavily coloured by the nature of salvation, and individual freedom intensified by the experience of abolitionism.¹²³ The armed conflicts associated with these, the Mexican-American War in 1846-1848 and the Civil War in 1860-1863, had the profound impact of generating a larger ideological pattern of the Protestant mission from the 1860s onwards. If in the first half of the nineteenth century political thought in the United States was dominated by the institution of slavery, with the formal resolution of slavery in the United States by the mid-1860s, the struggle to separate

¹²⁰ See Howe, D. W. (1970). *The Unitarian conscience: Harvard moral philosophy, 1805-1861*. Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press; Howe, D. W. (1979). *The political culture of the American Whigs*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press

¹²¹ See Goldie, M. (1987). The Civil Religion of James Harrington. In (ed) Pagden, A. *The Languages of political theory in early-modern Europe*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.206; for the American variant, see Hatch, N. O. (1977). *The sacred cause of liberty: republican thought and the millennium in Revolutionary New England*. New Haven, Yale University Press, pp.139-175; Guelzo, A. C. (1995). From Calvinist Metaphysics to Republican Theory: Jonathan Edwards and James Dana on Freedom of the will. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, v.56, pp.399-418

¹²² Hatch, N. O. (1977). *The sacred cause of liberty: republican thought and the millennium in Revolutionary New England*. New Haven, Yale University Press, pp.48-49

¹²³ Kloppenberg, J. T. (1998). *The virtues of liberalism*. New York, Oxford University Press, p.125

church and state so as to block Roman Catholics came to the fore in the political arena by the 1870s. The next section will discuss manner in which competing religious and political claims staked by American Protestants in the mid-century had united in their common animus against Roman Catholicism. The ideological templates of the American missionaries arriving on the shore of Chosŏn in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were faithful to this anti-Catholic baseline.

Anti-Romanism in the mid-century America

The Protestant Church must awake to her duty,
or Korea will become a Roman Catholic country...
Heathenism is darkness, but Romanism is blindness.
Horace Underwood¹²⁴

Among the contrivances which have been devised for deceiving and oppressing mankind, [...] [the Roman Church] occupies the highest place.
Lord Thomas Babington Maculay¹²⁵

Though the ebbs and flows of anti-Catholicism in American political and religious thought is a movement with a chequered history throughout the nineteenth century, dating back to the American Revolutionary era where many thought they resisted the “two sister furies” of popery and arbitrary power’, its presence was always palpable for those concerned with the future of

¹²⁴ Underwood, H. (1892). Romanism on Foreign Mission Fields. In (eds) Alliance of the reformed churches throughout the world holding the Presbyterian system, & Matthews, G. D. *Proceedings of the Fifth General Council, Toronto 1892*. Toronto, Hart & Riddell, p.415

¹²⁵ Quote in Anderson, M. L. (1995). The limits of secularization: on the problem of the Catholic revival in nineteenth-century Germany. *The Historical Journal*, v.38, n.3, p.647

Protestantism or a Christian form of polity in the United States.¹²⁶ Modern scholarship has gradually taken notice of the entrenched presence of Roman Catholicism, even only as a marginal space for American political imagination and mobilisation.¹²⁷ Scorns levelled at Roman Catholicism were largely in reference to popery and sacerdotal nature of the ecclesia. Samuel F. B. Morse, of the Morse telegraph fame, unambiguously proclaimed in 1835 that '[P]opery, while it is the natural antagonist of Protestantism, is opposed in its whole character to Republican liberty.'¹²⁸ Similarly in 1835 Lyman Beecher, the famed Presbyterian preacher and the father of Harriet Beecher Stowe, suspected the nefarious motives of European 'governments hostile to liberty' of American republic of flooding the nation and urged that it is 'the right of self-preservation, and the denial of it is treason' to stem the flow of alien Catholics into the United States.¹²⁹ The Mexican-American War of 1846-48 as a result of which California and New Mexico were annexed into the United States was imagined as a Christian-republican intervention in order to spread the gospel of liberty and drive out the temple of 'despotic clerical hierarchy with an unrepublican connection between church and state.'¹³⁰

The American Protestant Society, and the American and Foreign Christian Union mobilised the churches to the cause of defending the Bible and the faith from Rome whilst the lower social class endangered by millions of pauperised Roman Catholics from Ireland and lower Germany flocked to nativist campaigns in the first half of nineteenth century.¹³¹ Many Protestants with evangelical outlook assumed that the Jesuits were behind this mass immigration of Roman Catholics from Europe, glossing over the Irish Famine, to gain political control over the United States and to destroy

¹²⁶ Hatch, N. O. (1977). *The sacred cause of liberty: republican thought and the millennium in Revolutionary New England*. New Haven, Yale University Press, pp.73-74

¹²⁷ See Jenkins, P. (2004). *The new anti-Catholicism: the last acceptable prejudice*. Oxford, Oxford university press; McGreevy, J. T. (2003). *Catholicism and American freedom: a history*. New York, W.W. Norton

¹²⁸ Morse, S. F. B. (1969). *Imminent dangers to the free institutions of the United States through foreign immigration*. New York, Arno Press, p. 8

¹²⁹ Beecher, L. (1973). A Plea for the West. In Howe, D. W. *The American Whigs; an anthology*. New York, Wiley, p.141

¹³⁰ Pinheiro, J. C. (2001). "Extending the Light and Blessings of Our Purer Faith": Anti-Catholic Sentiment among American Soldiers in the U.S.-Mexican War. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, v.35, p.132

¹³¹ Billington, R. A. (1952). *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism*, New York, Rinehart & Company, Inc., p.391

the sanctuary of republicanism.¹³² It is worth noting that the ideological ascendancy of Protestant Christianity in mid-century America as the *de facto* civil religion was accompanied by the popularity of the term 'Anglo-Saxon', precisely as a reaction to the growing Irish Catholic inflow in the mid-century.¹³³

In the 1870s America witnessed the resurgence of anti-Catholicism again as Protestant Americans sought to consolidate Protestant nationalism. Two political events catalysed this in the United States: Vatican Council I held in 1869-1870 and the parochial school controversy in the late 1870s. The Vatican Council I, with the dogmatic promulgation of the 'infallibility of the papal office', rekindled the Protestant suspicion against Roman Catholicism as very much an unreconstructed medieval institution with its pretension of ecclesiastical supremacy over the secular state.¹³⁴ This Protestant fear was not ungrounded given the rise of ultramontane sentiment and the subsequent *Romanisation* of the Catholic Church in much of continental Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century following the Italian unification.¹³⁵ In the United States, against this Catholic resurgence the Madisonian concept of separation of powers was often invoked to criticise Roman Catholicism's alleged anti-republican despotism of 'mental slavery'.¹³⁶ Philip Schaff, one of the most

¹³² Pinheiro, J. C. (2014). *Missionaries of Republicanism: a religious history of the Mexican-American War*. New York, Oxford University Press, p.5

¹³³ Pinheiro, J. C. (2014). *Missionaries of Republicanism: a religious history of the Mexican-American War*. New York, Oxford University Press, p.10; for a general demographic picture see Finke, R., & Stark, R. (1992). *The churching of America, 1776-1990: winners and losers in our religious economy*. New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, pp.110-117

¹³⁴ Verhoeven T. (2014). Transatlantic connections: American anti-Catholicism and the first Vatican council (1869-70). *Catholic Historical Review*, v.100, pp.695-720; Smylie, J. H. (1969). American Protestants Interpret Vatican Council I, *Church History*, v.xxxviii, pp.459-474

¹³⁵ Vilallonga, B. (2014). The theoretical origins of catholic nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe. *Modern Intellectual History*, v.11, n.2, pp.307-331; Clark, C. (2009). The New Catholicism and the European culture wars. In (eds) Clark, C. and Kaiser, W. *Culture wars: secular-Catholic conflict in nineteenth-century Europe*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

¹³⁶ Hicks, L. E. (2002). Republican religion and republican institution: Alexander Campbell and the anti-Catholic movement. In (eds) Casey, M. W. & Foster, D. A. *The Stone-Campbell movement: an international religious tradition*. Knoxville, Tenn, Univ. of Tennessee Press, pp.208-209

eminent theologians of the century, opined that the papal authority thus pronounced is an 'absolute power, especially a spiritual kind... invariably intoxicating and demoralising'.¹³⁷

The culmination of this inflamed sectarianism was the political and legal struggle over the status of parochial school in the 1870s. What unsettled the American Protestant sense of predominance was the parents' demand for Catholic accommodation in the educational settings, either in their refusal of the King James Bible in school or setting up exclusive Catholic schools for children.¹³⁸ Central to the American Protestant faith in this period was the consistency of the revealed truth found in the Bible with the scientific advancements of the day, which in turn encouraged the literal interpretation of the Scripture.¹³⁹ When the prospect of individual salvation depended on the personal understanding and acceptance of the Scripture as the revealed Truth, the Catholic opposition to reading the King James Bible in the classroom incited tremendous popular hostility.¹⁴⁰ The American Catholics realised the only way to loosen the Protestant grip on schools and make room for Catholic education was by removing *all* religious references, thereby pushing for a complete 'separation'.¹⁴¹

Responses to this growing threat of Roman Catholic pressure by the Protestant republican divines were two fold: the idea of 'a Christian nation' under the standard of Protestant liberty, and religious pluralism in the form of inter-denominationalism against Roman Catholicism. At this point President Ulysses in 1875 intervened by publicly proclaiming that the American War of Independence itself

¹³⁷ Schaff, P. (1877). *The Creeds of Christendom with a history and critical notes*. New York, Harper, p.181; see also Gillett, E. H. (1870). Art. III.--Papal infallibility and the 19th century. *The American Presbyterian Review*, v.2, n.10, p.636

¹³⁸ Green, S. K. (2010). *The second disestablishment: church and state in nineteenth-century America*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp.290-326; Lannie, V. P. (1968). *Public money and parochial education; Bishop Hughes, Governor Seward, and the New York school controversy*. Cleveland, Press of Case Western Reserve University

¹³⁹ It should be noted that few saw any divergence between the rationalistic religion and science in this period. See Kosek, J. K. (2016). The spirit of reform: religious ideas and social change in modern America. *Modern Intellectual History*, Available on CJO 2015 doi:10.1017/S147924431500027X, p.4; Hicks, L. E. (2002). Republican religion and republican institution: Alexander Campbell and the anti-Catholic movement. In (eds) Casey, M. W. & Foster, D. A. *The Stone-Campbell movement: an international religious tradition*. Knoxville, Tenn, Univ. of Tennessee Press, p.210

¹⁴⁰ Billington, R. A. (1952). *The protestant crusade, 1800-1860: a study of the origins of American nativism*. New York, Rinehart, p.142

¹⁴¹ Lash, K. (2008). The Second Adoption of the Establishment Clause: The Rise of the Nonestablishment Principle, *Legal Studies Paper*, v.1, pp.1122-1130

was to ‘keep the church and state forever separate’, which was followed by the ultimately unsuccessful Blaine Amendment in 1879.¹⁴² As for the religious organisations, the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System in 1892 announced that ‘in spite of the tireless intrigues of Romanists, [the Public School] is still intact’.¹⁴³ Similarly, the Alliance believed that New England, the heartland of American Puritanism, was under attack from the Romanist ‘peaceful invasion’ from Quebec led by the Jesuits.¹⁴⁴ This new pluralistic Protestant coalition in the last quarter of the nineteenth century received the political sanctification in the form of a Supreme Court ruling in 1892 which pronounced the United States to be a ‘Christian nation’ against the *prospective* Catholic domination.¹⁴⁵ This was what Robert Handy termed ‘the informal establishment’, a political manoeuvre to maintain the Protestant position of pre-eminence in the United States.¹⁴⁶

But this development was far from a strict partitioning of state and church, which in effect implies secularisation of the state. The sectarian conflicts between Roman Catholics and Protestants, which continued until the 1960s were therefore not a move for secularisation or voluntary withdrawal of Christianity from public square in line with the principle of ‘strict separation’.¹⁴⁷ The concept of strictly ‘apolitical’ or ‘depoliticised’ Christianity in the context of nineteenth century American mission is not only inconsistent with the banner of liberty and Christian republicanism but

¹⁴² Grant, U. G. (2008). Separation of Church and School. In (eds) Schlup, L. C., & Blochowiak, M. A. *Contemporary observations of American religion in the 1870s: pulpits and polemics*. Lewiston, N.Y., Edwin Mellen Press, pp.192-193; Hamburger, P. (2002). *Separation of church and state*. Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, pp.272-273. Cf. Gunn, T. J. (2012). The Separation of Church and State versus Religion in the Public Square: The Contested History of the Establishment Clause. In (eds) Gunn, T. J. & Witte, J. *No establishment of religion: America's original contribution to religious liberty*. New York, Oxford University Press, p.31

¹⁴³ Alliance of the reformed churches throughout the world holding the presbyterian system, & Matthews, G. D. (1892). *Proceedings of the fifth General Council: Toronto, 1892*. Toronto, Hart & Riddell, p.408

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.404

¹⁴⁵ For the Supreme Court decision on *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States*, see Green, S. K. (2010). *The second disestablishment: church and state in nineteenth-century America*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp.251-325; Gordon, S. B. (2008). Law and Religion, 1790-1920. In (eds) Grossber, M., & Tomlins, C. L. *The Cambridge history of law in America. Vol. 2*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.438

¹⁴⁶ Handy, R. T. (2014). *Undermined Establishment Church-State Relations in America, 1880-1920*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, p.15

¹⁴⁷ Keller, R. H. (1983). *American Protestantism and United States Indian policy, 1869-82*. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, p.214

historically anachronistic.¹⁴⁸ As Philip Hamburger put it, the modern conception of separationism between church and state before the 1940s is simply ‘without historical foundation’.¹⁴⁹ The ideology of separation of church and state often touted by Korean church historians in describing the American missionaries’ political attitude in Chosŏn at the turn of the twentieth century, in fact, comes *after* the landmark ruling *Everson v. Board of Education* decision in 1947 that gave rise to the modern constitutional understanding of the separation of church and state, whose majority opinion was written by Justice Hugo Black, a notoriously anti-Catholic ex-Ku Klux Klan member.¹⁵⁰

The anti-Catholic intellectual context outlined above allows us to establish the cultural attitudes of American Protestant missionaries arriving in Chosŏn after 1882. If the domestic sectarian disputes over the issue public education heated up, the foreign mission fields proved explosive. The extraordinary growth of Anglo-American missionaries in the second half of the nineteenth century reaching all corners of the globe invariably meant their encounters were with not just ‘heathens’ but, more crucially, the entrenched presence of Roman Catholicism in places like Latin America and Asia. Whatever the individual missionaries’ attitudes and assumptions concerning Roman Catholicism back at home, sectarian suspicions often prevailed out in the mission fields and they invariably marched under the sectarian battle hymns.

When the first of the Anglo-American missionaries arrived in Korea in 1884, scarcely had two decades passed since the bloodiest period of persecution in 1866. Primarily known as the land of

¹⁴⁸ Ryu, D. Y. (2004). *Kaehwagi Chosŏn kwa miguk sŏn'gyosa: chegukchuŭi ch'imnyak, kaehwa chagang, kŭrigo miguk sŏn'gyosa* [Chosŏn's enlightenment period and the American missionaries: imperialism, enlightenment and self-strengthening, and American missionaries]. Sŏul, Han'guk Kidokkyo Yŏksa Yŏn'guso, pp.102-103

¹⁴⁹ Hamburger, P. (2002). *Separation of church and state*. Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, p.481; see also Hamburger, P. (2002). Separation and Interpretation. *Journal of law and politics*, v.18, p.30

¹⁵⁰ Handy dated the apogee of American Protestantism between the 1860s and the 1920s. See Handy, R. T. (1953). The Protestant Quest for a Christian America 1830–1930. *Church History*, v.22, p.15; For *Everson v. Board of Education*, see Berg, T. C. (2012). Disestablishment from Blaine to Everson: Federalism, School Wars, and the Emerging Modern State. In (eds) Gunn, T. J., & Witte, J. *No establishment of religion: America's original contribution to religious liberty*. New York, Oxford University Press; Gordon, S. B. (2010). *The spirit of the law: religious voices and the Constitution in modern America*. Cambridge, Mass, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press; Green, S. K. (2010). *The second disestablishment: church and state in nineteenth-century America*. Oxford, Oxford University Press; Witte, J., & Nichols, J. A. (2016). *Religion and the American constitutional experiment*. New York, Oxford University Press

martyrs before its hermitic solitude, Roman Catholicism arrived through self-evangelisation via indirect contact with the envoys to Beijing in the late eighteenth century, although various dogmatic apologies invited commentaries by Chosŏn scholars as early as the early eighteenth century.¹⁵¹ However, once the court realised that Roman Catholicism, initially termed the 'western learning' [Kr: 서학] was received along the the court factional alignment, it prompted political backlashes throughout the nineteenth-century. Punctuated by the waves of persecutions in the first-half of the nineteenth century ending in 1866 with over 10,000 native Catholics and nine French priests dead, the political and social atmosphere in Chosŏn turned deeply suspicious of any suggestions of foreign religious influences.¹⁵² Tellingly, American Protestant missionaries, largely oblivious of the actual identity of the French Catholic mission frequently mistook the priests belonging to *Société des Missions étrangères de Paris* with the Jesuits.¹⁵³ Suspensions over Jesuitism as the arch-agents of Romish conspiracy was probably from the two immensely influential sources: *History of Corea: Ancient and Modern* in 1879 by John Ross of Scottish Presbyterian Church, and *Corea, the Hermit Kingdom* in 1882 by the American Congregationalist William Elliot Griffis through which the subsequent generation of Protestant missionaries learned the ancient customs, political systems and the presence of Roman Catholicism in Chosŏn.¹⁵⁴ The views concerning the Jesuits in the two accounts were often mixed. Ross believed that Jesuits, in as far as they acted independently of the Vatican, were 'in a sense Protestants.'¹⁵⁵ His compliment, however, was nonetheless brief as Ross reminded the readers of the Jesuits as a force of foreign plot. The episode of a Jesuit chaplain

¹⁵¹ See Min, K.-B. (2007). *Han'guk Kidok kyohoesa: Han'guk minjok kyohoe hyŏngsŏng kwajŏngsa*. Sŏul-si, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.56-58; for more contemporary accounts, see Baker, D. & Rausch, F. (2017). *Catholics and anti-Catholics in Chosŏn Korea*. University of Hawaii, Honolulu.

¹⁵² Finch, A. J. (2015). The 'blood of the martyrs' and the growth of Catholicism in late Chosŏn Korea. *Historical Research*, v.88, pp.674-692; Finch, A. J. (2000). A Persecuted Church: Roman Catholicism in Early Nineteenth-Century Korea. *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, v.51, pp.556-580

¹⁵³ Appenzeller, H. G., & Jones, G. H. (1905). *The Korea mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*. New York, Open Door Emergency Commission, p.33

¹⁵⁴ Griffis, W. E. (1882). *Corea, the hermit nation I. Ancient and mediaeval history. II. Political and social Corea. III. Modern and recent history*. New York, Scribner; Ross, J. (1891). *History of Corea, ancient and modern: with description of manners and customs, language and geography*. London, Elliot Stock

¹⁵⁵ Ross, J. (1891). *History of Corea, ancient and modern: with description of manners and customs, language and geography*. London, Elliot Stock, p.291

accompanying the Japanese invaders in the sixteenth century encapsulated this impression in Chapter 14 'Japanese Romanist against Corea'. Ross argued that converts to Roman Catholicism were expected to form an 'attachment to a foreign civil [Rome] power' over the local civil magistrate, with the Romish missionaries assuming the role of 'the secret agents of a foreign power, having designs on Korean land and freedom'.¹⁵⁶ Given the nature of the threats posed by Roman Catholicism, the persecution by the government leading to the death of thousands of 'Corean-foreigners' becomes 'explicable'.¹⁵⁷ Unsurprisingly when the Boxer rebellion erupted in 1899, John Ross placed the blame squarely on the Roman Catholic spiritual tyranny for the popular fury targeting western missionaries and Chinese Christians.¹⁵⁸

Taking Ross's description as a starting point, William Elliot Griffis, a full-blown adherent of the mid-nineteenth century Dutch-American Christian republicanism catapulted himself into a helm of authority on Korea in 1882, the year Chosŏn and the United States formalised the diplomatic relations.¹⁵⁹ The huge popularity of the book, composed without having set foot in Chosŏn, must be attributed as much to his erudition as his sectarian prejudices. From the proud stock of Northern abolitionist and celebrated author of *Mikado's Empire*, *Brave Little Holland*, and *What She Taught Us*, and *The Romance of Conquest: The Story of American Expansion Through Arms and Diplomacy*, Griffis updated the narrative of anti-Catholicism for the expectant missionaries.¹⁶⁰ According to Griffis, Chosŏn Christians under the spell of Romish blasphemy 'played the part of traitors to their country', thereby falling into the modus operandi characteristic of Roman Catholicism: 'by the foul and abominable teaching that evil should be done in order that good might come... the best

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p.292

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p.294

¹⁵⁸ Pak, H.-S. (2011). Manchu chuchae sŏnkyosa chon losŭ (John Ross) ŭi ŭihwatanuntong ihae [John Ross of Manchuria and the understanding of the Boxer rebellion]. *Manchu yŏn'gu*, v.11, pp.267-268

¹⁵⁹ For Griffis's perception of Korea see Yi, Y.-M. (2014). Ilbon ŭi han'guk chibae e taehan gŭripisu ui t'aedo [Griffis's attitude regarding the Japanese rule of Korea]. *Han'guksa yŏn'gu (The Journal of Korean History)*, v.9, n.166, pp.271-297

¹⁶⁰ Griffis, W. E. (1876). *The Mikado's Empire*. New York, Harper; Griffis, W. E. (1894). *Brave little Holland, and what she taught us*. Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin and Co.; Griffis, W. E. (1899). *The romance of conquest: the story of American expansion through arms and diplomacy*. Boston, W.A. Wilde Company

casuistry of the Roman Catholic Church'.¹⁶¹ Griffis's contention that Roman Catholicism invited the 'inevitable "French expedition"' without so much a word about the American naval incursion, commonly known as the General Sherman incidence in 1866, captures well the contemporary Protestant anxieties in encounters with the Roman Catholics in Chosŏn.¹⁶²

Throughout the book Griffis admitted none but most disparaging views of Roman Catholic doctrines, synonymous with the ecclesiastical-temporal supremacy of the Pope, and a conspiracy by European Powers with the priests 'as the pilot of gunboats'.¹⁶³ For the discussion at hand it is worth noting the extent to which Griffis situated his matrix of virtue and liberty as north Atlantic tradition that ties together the Dutch, England and America, distinct from France and Spain.¹⁶⁴ Griffis was far from being alone in diagnosing the historical continuity between the slave-holding American South and Roman Catholic nations. In the *Fifth General Council Proceeding* by the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System in Toronto, 1895, one finds a lengthy session on Romanism in N. and S. America in which the Rev. Bushnell of Chattanooga: 'Romanism is a menace to everything distinctively American[...] to free speech, a free press, popular education, and every other form of progress[...] That Rome in all the Americas, is unalterably opposed to popular education and intelligence, is hardly questioned anywhere'.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Griffis, W. E. (1882). *Corea, the hermit nation I. Ancient and mediaeval history. II. Political and social Corea. III. Modern and recent history*. New York, Scribner, p.360, 366, 376

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¹⁶³ Griffis, W. E. (1907). *Corea, The Hermit Nation; I. Ancient and Mediæval History. II. Political and Social Corea. III. Modern and Recent History*. New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 360; see also Report of Commission VII: Missions and Governments, with supplement: presentation and discussion of the Report in the Conference on 20th June 1910, p.11

¹⁶⁴ See Griffis, W. E. (1894). *Brave little Holland, and what she taught us*. Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin and Co.; Griffis, W. E. (1898). *The Pilgrims in their three homes, England, Holland, America*. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin and Co.; Motley, J. L., & Griffis, W. E. (1903). *The siege of Leyden: condensed from Motley's "The rise of the Dutch republic"*. Boston, D.C. Heath; Griffis, W. E. (1909). *The story of New Netherland, the Dutch in America*. Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Co.; Griffis, W. E. (1903). *Young people's history of Holland*. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin and Company; Griffis, W. E. (1899). *The American in Holland; sentimental rambles in the eleven provinces of the Netherlands*. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin and Co.

¹⁶⁵ Alliance of the reformed churches throughout the world holding the presbyterian system, & Matthews, G. D. (1892). *Proceedings of the fifth General Council: Toronto, 1892*. Toronto, Hart & Riddell, p.406

In this sense much of Griffis's writings reveal how the fear of Roman Catholic deluge at home seamlessly translated into the fear of confessionalised colonies by Spain in the Pacific and elsewhere, undoubtedly fuelled by his obsession of the history of Spanish Low Lands.¹⁶⁶ The *Manual of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian System* in 1898 specifically asserted that their fight against immorality stood the 'Romanist', as 'liberty opposing tyranny'.¹⁶⁷ Griffis's belief that American expansion into the Pacific marked a fundamental point of departure from the earlier European endeavours was inextricably tied to his view of American republic as divinely elected to spread liberty, both civil and religious. Roman Catholicism, of course, was a regressive force that did not 'reform society'.¹⁶⁸ The touring superintendent of the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Board Robert Speer registered similar concerns in arguing that 'Christianity is essentially an emancipating religion, and leads inevitably to the desire for free government [...] Catholics have always erred in the want of patriotism, and indeed, in being guilty of downright treason to Korea', undoubtedly a veiled reference to the Silk Letter incident in which a Korean Catholic named Hwang Sa-yŏng sought to ask for papal military intervention to deliver the Korean Catholics from the government persecution in 1801.¹⁶⁹

In other words, these accounts stressed that Roman Catholicism, by seeking to confessionalise its colonial holdings oppressed the fundamental right of religious liberty in defence of which the United

¹⁶⁶ Griffis, W. E. (1907). *Corea, the hermit nation; I. Ancient and mediæval history. II. Political and social Corea. III. Modern and recent history*. New York, C. Scribner's Sons, p.360; for the contemporary French Catholic political thought, see Perreau-Saussine, M. (2010). French Catholic political thought from the deconfessionalisation of the state to the recognition of religious freedom. In (eds) Katznelson, I. & Jones, G. S. *Religion and the Political Imagination*. Cambridge University Press, pp.150-170

¹⁶⁷ Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian System, & Roberts, W. H. (1898). *Manual of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System: with a brief history of the Alliance*. Philadelphia, p.14

¹⁶⁸ Griffis, W. E. (1899). *America in the East; a glance at our history, prospects, problems, and duties in the Pacific Ocean*. New York, A.S. Barnes and Company, pp.84-85

¹⁶⁹ Speer, R. E. (1897). *Report on the mission in Korea of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions*. New York, Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.; for the Silk Letter incident see Rausch, F. (2009). Wicked Officials and Virtuous Martyrs: an analysis of the martyr biographies in Alexius Hwang Sayŏng's Silk Letter. *Kyohoesa yŏn'gu (The Research Foundation of Korean Church History)*, v.32, pp.5-30

States came into being.¹⁷⁰ Americans would never tolerate colonialism similar to ‘the Spanish, French, or the abandoned Dutch or British style’, declares Griffis in *America in the East: A Glance at Our History, Prospects, Problems, and Duties in the Pacific Ocean* (1899), categorically adding that ‘[S]lavery is over.’¹⁷¹ After all, for the Northern abolitionist such as Griffis the growing list of American conquests now includes the ‘slavery, dishonesty, bad money, duelling, lynch law, violence, drunkenness, and the liquor power’ prevailing in West Indies and Indochina under the Catholic powers.¹⁷² The colonial rule in the Philippines was ‘more *Spanish* than human’ and ‘more *Roman* than Catholic’.¹⁷³ Opposite of the ‘open Bible and teaching democracy’ stands the ‘Christians of the Roman Cult’.¹⁷⁴ As many influential divines like Josiah Strong, of the *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (1885) fame known for his highly influential jingoism, amongst whose numerous fans Rhee Syngman was one, observed that Catholicism was ‘one of the ten perils threatening American society’ from both within and without.¹⁷⁵ This American attitude marked a clear contrast to the British counterpart which raised hardly any scruple concerning Roman Catholicism other than over occasional lexical usage of God (Kr: 천주; C: 天主).¹⁷⁶

The first wave of American missionaries such as Horace Underwood and Henry Appenzeller, under such cultural climates, reiterated the themes of Roman ecclesiastical despotism and spiritual oppression in attacking the Roman Catholic presence in Chosŏn, against which stood the liberal and

¹⁷⁰ World missionary conference. (1910). *Report of Commission VII: Missions and governments: with Supplement: Presentation and discussion of the Report in the Conference on 20th June 1910*. Edinburgh, Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, p.149

¹⁷¹ Griffis, W. E. (1899). *America in the East; a glance at our history, prospects, problems, and duties in the Pacific Ocean*. New York, A.S. Barnes and Company, p.6

¹⁷² Griffis, W. E. (1899). *The romance of conquest: the story of American expansion through arms and diplomacy*. Boston, W.A. Wilde Company, p.310

¹⁷³ Griffis, W. E. (1899). *America in the East; a glance at our history, prospects, problems, and duties in the Pacific Ocean*. New York, A.S. Barnes and Company, p.228 (my emphasis)

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.230

¹⁷⁵ On Josiah Strong, see Muller, D. (1966). Josiah Strong and American Nationalism: A Reevaluation. *The Journal of American History*, v.53 (3), pp.487-503; Reed, J. (1972). American Foreign Policy, The Politics of Missions and Josiah Strong, 1890–1900. *Church History*, v.41 (2), pp.230-245; Su, A. (2015). *Exporting freedom: religious liberty and American power*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, p.15

¹⁷⁶ For the terminological disputes, see Oak, S.-D., Yi, M., & Taehan Sŏngsŏ Konghoe. (2004). *Taehan Sŏngsŏ Konghoesa*, v.2, p.159; for the detailed discussion on lexical debates across China and Korea, see Oak, S.-D. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876 - 1915*. Waco, Baylor University Press, pp.33-83

republican Christianity of America. In the fifth General Council of the Alliance of the Presbyterian System, which Horace Underwood attended, deep suspicions against Roman Catholicism was spelt out in no uncertain terms: 'Romanism is a menace to everything distinctively American[...] to free speech, a free press, popular education, and every other form of progress.'¹⁷⁷ Underwood elaborated this in his paper 'Romanism on the Foreign Mission Field' where he asserted that Rome was 'no small factor' in a new heathen land, eager to 'pull down as fast as we build.'¹⁷⁸ In this report Underwood described how the Jesuits incorporated non-Christian elements such as ancestral worship in an unscrupulous tactic to gain new converts, allowing Roman Catholics to simply 'sanctify' heathen customs: 'in India she is Brahmin; in China, Confucian; in Japan and Korea, Buddhistic (sic)'.¹⁷⁹ With 'the superstitions and prejudices of Rome' now well-entrenched in Chosŏn, as well as 'iniquitous fables, lying wonders' at variance with the true Gospel, Underwood was alarmed at the prospect of Korea '[becoming] a Roman Catholic Country'.¹⁸⁰

Henry Appenzeller, the first American Methodist in Korea, also came to share this view. Appenzeller conceived of his local rows with Roman Catholics in terms of a centuries-long struggle since the 'horrors of St. Bartholomew's and the barbarities in the Low countries.'¹⁸¹ Appenzeller likened the veneration of saints and icons of Catholicism to a heathen fetish worship. In an epilogue to *Dialogue with a Temple Keeper*, a short pamphlet translated from Chinese, Appenzeller wrote that 'the Jesus doctrine is not like Romanism[...] Although Romanism was from one origin, it worships ancestral tablets and images against the commandment of God'.¹⁸² Believing that Protestantism was at war with 'scepticism, rationalism, Roman Catholicism and Mormonism', Appenzeller maintained that

¹⁷⁷ Alliance of the reformed churches throughout the world holding the presbyterian system, & Matthews, G. D. (1892). *Proceedings of the fifth General Council: Toronto, 1892*. Toronto, Hart & Riddell, p.406

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p.409

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.411

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p.415

¹⁸¹ Davies, D. M. (1988). *The life and thought of Henry Gerhard Appenzeller (1858-1902), missionary to Korea*. Lewiston, N.Y., USA, E. Mellen Press, pp.390-392

¹⁸² The ancestral worship was prohibited in Roman Catholicism until 1939. Oak, S.-D. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876 - 1915*. Waco, Texas, Baylor University Press, p.23

Protestant religion '[defied] the Papal power in Mexico' and vanquished Romism in the 'Republic of South America'.¹⁸³

The anxiety over Roman Catholicism surged again when France formally signed the treaty with Chosŏn in 1887, five years after the US-Chosŏn treaty. The establishment of the French Religious Protectorate of the Roman Catholic church in East Asia since the Sino-French Treaty of Tianjin of 1858 meant that the Catholic converts in Korea also enjoyed the *de jure* protection of the French imperial presence in East Asia, exacerbating political tension with local authorities which was called *jiào àn* (Kr: 교안; C: 教案).¹⁸⁴ Worried that French Catholic priests would evangelise openly in Chosŏn in view of this Protectorate after the treaty, Underwood and Appenzeller were quick to press the American Consul General for the same privilege in accordance with the most-favoured-nation clause, a demand unrealised until 1900.¹⁸⁵ But the haste still got the better of the Protestant missionaries. Before obtaining the proper clearance, Underwood and Appenzeller were quick to take to the road outside of Seoul to proselytise despite the royal edict banning Christian activities.¹⁸⁶ When the king sternly reminded of the anti-Christian edict still in effect in June 1888 over the Protestant proselytising trips outside the extraterritorial areas, Appenzeller put blame squarely on 'Romanism and the Devil [that] tried very hard to kick us out a month ago'.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Davies, D. M. (1988). *The life and thought of Henry Gerhard Appenzeller (1858-1902), missionary to Korea*. Lewiston, N.Y., USA, E. Mellen Press, pp.84-85

¹⁸⁴ Wu, A. M. (2016). *From Christ to Confucius: German missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the globalization of Christianity, 1860-1950*, pp.62-63; see also Young, E. P. (2013). *Ecclesiastical colony: China's Catholic Church and the French religious protectorate*. Oxford, Oxford University Press; for the scholarly discussions of kyoan, see Pang, S.-K. (2001). Hanmal Ch'ŏnjugyo wa cheju kyoan – palsaeng paekyŏng ŭl chungsim ŭro [The cases of *jiào àn* in late Chosŏn – on the reasons behind its eruption]. *Kyohoesa yŏn'gu = The Research Foundation of Korean Church History*, v. 17, pp.49-74; Park, C.-S. (1999). Roman Catholic Church and Kyoan Incident in Kangkyungpo in the Later Choson Dynasty. *Han'guk hakpo*, v.25, pp.65-91

¹⁸⁵ Ryu, T.-Y. (2003). Treaties, Extraterritorial Rights, and American Protestant Missions in Late Joseon Korea. *Korea Journal*, v.43, o.199; Oak, S.-D., Yi, M., & Taehan Sŏngsŏ Konghoe, 1-kwŏn. (2004). *Taehan Sŏngsŏ Konghosa*. [Korean Bible Committee]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Taehan Sŏngsŏ Konghoe, p.83, 327, 399

¹⁸⁶ Ryu, T.-Y. (2004). *Kaehwagi Chosŏn kwa miguk sŏn'gyosa: chegukchu'i ch'imnyak, kaehwa chagang, kŭrigo miguk sŏn'gyosa*. Sŏul, Han'guk Kidokkyo Yŏksa Yŏn'guso, Chapter 4; Harrington, F. H. (1944). *God, mammon, and the Japanese; Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American relations, 1884-1905*. Madison, Wis, The University of Wisconsin Press, pp.51-59

¹⁸⁷ Davies, D. M. (1988). *The life and thought of Henry Gerhard Appenzeller (1858-1902), missionary to Korea*. Lewiston, N.Y., USA, E. Mellen Press, p.58, 299

The rising sectarian tension between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Korea from 1886 to 1903 need not detain us here, other than to highlight that the fast-changing political climate in the 1890s – the second *Tonghak* uprising in 1894, the first Sino-Japan War in 1894, the Boxer rebellion in 1899, the anti-Catholic uprising in Cheju in 1901 – did little to improve the American Protestant missionaries' antagonism towards Roman Catholics in Korea. The American Protestant missionaries would have required very little effort to persuade local Koreans of the dangers of Roman Catholicism, for engrained cultural hostility against it was already present in late Chosŏn. The instant popularity of the Korean translation of *Cuestion Filipina* (Kr: 비올빈 전사; c: 比律賓戰史) by Mariano Ponce, narrating the war of independence waged by the Filipinos against Spain and the United States in the early 1900s testifies to this transnational cultural undercurrent.¹⁸⁸ Another literary bestseller in the late 1900s was an anti-French treaties entitled *The Fall of Vietnam* (Kr: 월남 망국사; c: 越南亡國史) narrating the national suffering and humiliation under the French Catholic yoke, which prompted enthusiastic reception and circulation from the Protestant quarter in Korea.¹⁸⁹ In this climate, the American war against Spain in 1898 ratcheted up the sectarian polemics.¹⁹⁰

The separation and religious liberty

With Roman Catholicism posited as the antithesis of liberty and theocratic predispositions, one is better placed to appreciate the Protestant views on the separation of church and state. Many historians of Korea have subscribed to the idea that American Protestantism introduced a strict

¹⁸⁸ Cho, H.-I. (2003). Ankuksŏn ūi kyemong minjokchuŭi wa munhakkwan [An Kuk-son's enlightenment nationalism and views on literature]. *Kukcheŏmun*, v.27, pp.87-116; Noh, Y.-S. (2009). Ankuksŏn ūi piyulpichŏnsa wa tongyangchip'ungun pikyoyŏnku. [A comparative study on An Kuk-son's *piyulpichŏnsa* and *namyangjipung'un*] *Han'guk hyŏntae munhak yŏn'gu*, v.29, pp.43-71; Ch'oe, K.-Y. (2003). *Han'guk kŭndae kyemong sasang yŏn'gu* [Korean modern enlightenment thought]. Sŏul-si, Ilchogak, pp.292-324

¹⁸⁹ Ch'oe, K.-Y. (1996). Hanmal ch'ŏnchukyohoe wa wŏllam mangguksa [Roman Catholicism in Korea and wŏllam mangguksa]. *Asiamunhwa*, p.398; Kang, Y.-S. (2014). 1900 nyŏndae tongasia ūi wŏllam mangguksa yut'ong kwa suyong – han'guk, chungguk, wŏlnam ūl chungsim ūro [The circulation and reception of wŏllam mangguksa in East Asia in the 1900s]. *Ihwa sahak yŏn'gu*, p.49

¹⁹⁰ Su, A. (2015). *Exporting freedom: religious liberty and American power*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, pp.11-35

separation between religion and politics. At the heart of the matter is the incipient idea of Protestant political neutrality in the 1890s which, according to church historians, gave birth to Christian nationalism, civic patriotism and political modernity.¹⁹¹ Whilst some students have come to question this historiographical account, given the impeccable coincidence of the missionary calls for de-politicisation from 1905 onwards with the Japanese *de facto* control over Korea, for the most part Christian separationism has served as the normative starting point of the discussions of modern political relations between church and state, for good or ill.¹⁹²

But did American Protestants believe that church and state ought to be divorced from each other in this period? One need not begin with the First Amendment or Thomas Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists in 1803 expressing his desire to erect 'a wall of separation between church and state'.¹⁹³ However, throughout the nineteenth century it was the 'secularism' of Jefferson that disquieted the American religionists at the beginning of the nineteenth century, not 'separatism'.¹⁹⁴ Neither the historical reality of the nineteenth century American religious and political thought, nor the local situation on the ground supports the suggestions of separationism as a political or constitutional norm.¹⁹⁵ Well into the twentieth century, American Protestants were concerned with disestablishment. Disestablishment, often synonymous with the idea of toleration and pluralistic

¹⁹¹ See Chapter 2, *passim*

¹⁹² Chŏng, P.-C. (2009). Haepang ichŏn kyohoe kukka kwankye ūi kuchochŏk pyŏnhwa yŏnku: kaesinkyohoe lŭl chungsim ūlo [A study on the structural transformation of pre-liberation church-state relationship: centred on Protestant church]. *Sŏnkyo wa sinhak*, v.23, 222; Hong, I.-P. (2006). Ōntŏutŭ ūi kyohoe wa kukka: church & state insik [Underwood's church and state: perception on church and state], *Han'guk kidokkyo yŏksa yŏn'guso sosik*, v.4, p.25

¹⁹³ See Buckley, T. E. (2013). *Establishing religious freedom: Jefferson's statute in Virginia*. Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press

¹⁹⁴ See Hamburger, P. (2002). *Separation of church and state*. Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press. Only Virginia and Rhode Island instituted a kind of separatism that we would recognise, where government refuses to provide for churches, Noll, M. A. (2002). *The old religion in a new world: the history of North American Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Mich, Eerdmans, p. 72; Gordon, S. B. (2008) Law and Religion, 1790-1920. In (eds) Grossber, M., & Tomlins, C. L. *The Cambridge history of law in America. Vol. 2*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.424

¹⁹⁵ Sheldon, G. W., & Dresibach, D. L. (2000). *Religion and political culture in Jefferson's Virginia*. Lanham, Md, Rowman & Littlefield, Chapter 8

view of reformed Christianity in the United States, was fundamentally distinct from separatism.¹⁹⁶

Indeed many Methodists condemned the move to separate religion and politics as ‘crippling to the legitimate power of the pulpit... dangerous to public morals [and] dangerous to the state.’¹⁹⁷ This common assumption which held public morality and well-governed society without religious guidance as implausible was shared by most Americans, a tradition which lasted well into the mid-twentieth century.¹⁹⁸ The only significant denomination that called for the strict separation of church and state until the 1850s was the Quakers which ‘espoused and maintained a sharp separation of church and state because they were convinced that, in any formal union, the state will always corrupt the church.’ Jefferson and Madison did defend the principle of rigid separation, but for the opposite reason, believing that if any church is established by law, ‘will corrupt the polity’.¹⁹⁹

Feeling under siege by the growing Catholic population, the haunting fear of Roman Catholic establishment alarmed the Protestant majority of religious establishment *anywhere* as anathema to both religious sensibility and political peace. This fear of religious establishment was not entirely unfounded in the context of Chosŏn for there were a couple of haphazard attempts to ‘establish’ a state religion starting in late nineteenth century. Under rapidly changing political contexts, the proposals of state church establishment came from all directions, almost all a political manoeuvre. Paul Georg von Möllendorff, the German advisor to the Chosŏn court until 1888 apparently solicited for the Catholic establishment in Chosŏn, including the possibility of the king himself converting to Roman Catholicism. Though initially intrigued, the Bishop Gustave-Charles-Marie Mutel rejected the proposal.²⁰⁰ Particularly after the deconfessionalisation of France, the Roman Catholic authority

¹⁹⁶ For a view that suggests how religious toleration was based the idea of human equality, see Nussbaum, M. C. (2008). *Liberty of conscience: in defense of America's tradition of religious equality*. New York, Basic Books, Chapter 3

¹⁹⁷ Morrow, R. E. (1954). Northern Methodism in the South during Reconstruction. *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, v.41, p.212

¹⁹⁸ Gunn, T.J., & Slighoua, M. (2011). The spiritual factor: Eisenhower, religion, and foreign policy. *Review of Faith and International Affairs*, v.9, pp.39-49

¹⁹⁹ Murrin, J. (2007). First settlements to the Civil War. In (eds) Noll, M. A., & Harlow, L. E. *Religion and American politics: from the colonial period to the present*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.37

²⁰⁰ Chang, T.-H. (2000). Kaehangki ch'ŏnchukyohoe wa chonggyo chayū munje – 1884 nyŏn moellentolŭp'ŭ ŭi chean ŭl chungsim ŭro [Roman Catholicism and the freedom of religion issue in the enlightenment period -

possessed neither the ecclesiastical resolve nor the legal authority to undertake the establishment of Roman Catholicism in Chosŏn.²⁰¹ Similarly, Liliana Underwood recalled her husband being approached to 'establish a State Presbyterian Church in Korea', which would include the baptism of the entire court including the sovereign himself.²⁰² This came about when some in the court feared for the prospect of the emperor's vassalage and forced conversion to the Greek Orthodox as a result of the Russian supremacy over Korea in 1899. In other words, the source of the unfounded fears of confessionalisation and religious establishment was most likely the governing authority itself, not an actual design by any of the outside powers. In fact, the closest that Chosŏn ever came was in 1899 when the emperor Kwangmu (previously King Kojong) announced in his imperial edict that 'His Majesty will reign as the sovereign of the Confucian religion (Kr: 종주; C: 宗主) in His realm and cast bright the edifying ways of Kija and Confucius.'²⁰³ This remarkable statement by Kojong concerning Kija, the ancient Chinese aristocrat who came to Korea in 1122 B.C. reportedly to spread Confucianism, draws attention to the similar contemporary assessment by Appenzeller who fashioned Kija as a Chinese 'Moses, a virtuous lawgiver and founder of a new religion.'²⁰⁴

Even in the face of these intermittent attempts at religious establishment, American Protestant missionaries did not clamour for the strict separation. To suggest that the idea of separation of church and state with which we are familiar enjoyed the normative purchase in the 1890s, or even

with the focus on the 1884 proposal by Mollendorf]. *Han'guk kūnhyōndaesa yŏn'gu*, v.12, p.22; for more of Mollendorf's involvement with the Catholic church, see Sŏul taehakkyo. (1992). *Han'guk kūndaesa e taehan charyo: Osūt'ŭria Hōnggari Cheguk oegyo pogosŏ (1885-1913)*. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Sinwŏn Munhwasa, p.31

²⁰¹ For the nineteenth century French deconfessionalisation, see Perreau-Saussine, M. (2010). French Catholic political thought from the deconfessionalisation of the state to the recognition of religious freedom. In (eds) Katznelson, I., & Jones, G. S. *Religion and the Political Imagination*. Cambridge University Press

²⁰² Underwood, L. H. (1918). *Underwood of Korea; being an intimate record of the life and work of the Rev. H.G. Underwood, D.D., LL. D., for thirty one years a missionary of the Presbyterian board in Korea*. New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., pp.204-205

²⁰³ See Yi, C.-K. (1995). Kūntae hankuk kaesinkyo ūi t'achongkyo ihae: pip'an ūi nonli rūl chungsim ūro [Modern Korean Protestantism understanding: centring on criticism and logic]. *Han'guk kidokkyo wa yŏksa*, v.4, p.139; see *Kojong silok*. (1899). Kwangmu 3-nyŏn, April 27 (http://sillok.history.go.kr/id/wza_13604027_002: last accessed June 24, 2016)

²⁰⁴ Oak, S.-D. (2002). North American missionaries' understanding of the Tan'gun and Kija myths of Korea, 1884-1934. *Acta Koreana*, v.5, n.1, pp.51-73

by 1910 is therefore deeply anachronistic.²⁰⁵ Largely understood in terms of disestablishment, the view of separation of church and state lacked the normative purchase one casually imagines nowadays, for the conception of separationism did not imply in any way secularisation of politics, or evacuation of religion from politics. On the contrary Protestant missionaries not only were proud of privileged relations with the political elites but considered it vital to transform the political culture itself for the viable future of Korea in line with the earlier notion of Christian republicanism (and later, political Protestantism).

If not separation of church and state, on what normative ground did American Protestant missionaries frame their political demand in Chosŏn? The answer was religious liberty. And the American Protestant missionaries rarely abided by the principle of political non-interference in the mission field unless there already existed a legal regime sanctioning and protecting religious liberty. Some missionaries such as George H. Jones frankly acknowledged that the missionary demand for religious liberty was tantamount to 'legal privileges, however strongly they may be urged as moral rights.'²⁰⁶ And the missionaries did not relent until 'there be full religious liberty', as Horace Underwood recalled on par with the French treaty provision under the most favoured nation clause.²⁰⁷ The American officials at home throughout this period were careful not to endanger the fragile relations with the Chosŏn court, and sought to enforce the standard of 'political non-interference', a proscription increasingly challenged by Horace Underwood and other field missionaries on exercise of their 'right of religious liberty', guaranteed by the US Constitution.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ The one notable exception that specifically addresses the problem of the state intervention is Chŏng, P.-C. (2009). *Haepang ichŏn kyohoe kukka kwan'gye ūi kujōjōk pyŏnhwa yŏnku: kaesin kyohoe rūl chungsim ūro* [A study on the structural transformation of pre-liberation church-state relationship: centred on Protestant church]. *Sŏnkyo wa sinhak*, v.23, p.229

²⁰⁶ Ryu, T.-Y. (2003). Treaties, Extraterritorial Rights, and American Protestant Missions in Late Joseon Korea. *Korea Journal*, v.43, p.202

²⁰⁷ Oak, S. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876-1915*. Waco, Baylor University Press, p.22

²⁰⁸ Kim, S.-T. (1997). Hanmal ilche ch'imlyakki ilche wa sŏnkyosa ūi kwankye e taehan yŏnku (1894~1910) [A study on the relationship between Japanese imperialism and American (1894~1910)]. *Ha'guk kidokkyo wa yŏksa*, v.6, pp.71-72; Son, C.-S. (2004). Chuhan mikuk imsi taeri kongsa p'ok'ŭ yŏnku(1884~1887) [A study on the American minister Foote in Korea]. *Han'guk kūnhyŏndaesa yŏnku*, v.31, p.27

Ever a realist, Horace Allen, having had to censure the missionaries without ‘scarce a day [passing]’, was not terribly enthusiastic about securing religious freedom on behalf of the missionaries.²⁰⁹

Therefore, whilst the idea of separation of church and state possessed little or no normative or ideological purchase, the Protestant missionaries of all stripes were concerned to secure the legal protection of religious freedom beyond the designated treaty ports. Most relevant to contemporary American missionaries, as well as Korean political actors, was above all the ways in which the legal provision of religious liberty would impact Korean politics and society, a concern well-justified given the spike in violent clashes once French and American missionaries had to be accommodated in a local setting.²¹⁰ American diplomats were certainly circumspect about exacting a right of religious freedom from the Chosŏn court. The American missionaries frequently invoked their passion for martyrdom as much as their faith in US gunboats: ‘What is our navy for’, asked one American missionary to Horace Allen nonchalantly, ‘if not for the protection of us missionaries?’²¹¹ As a result, American officials such as Lucius H. Foote or Horace N. Allen, himself a missionary, had maintained a realist stance and, in principle, opposed to pressuring Chosŏn government to amend the religious clauses very much against the wishes of American field missionaries.²¹² His fear was well justified: the Boxer Rebellion of 1899-1901, which devastated much of the Christian mission network in China, prompted the home mission boards to seriously question the political implication of the foreign mission.²¹³

²⁰⁹ Harrington, F. H. (1944). *God, mammon, and the Japanese; Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American relations, 1884-1905*. Madison, Wis, The University of Wisconsin Press, p.110

²¹⁰ It should be noted that French government was far more aggressive in obtaining the religious liberty clause than the American. See Shin, K.-C. (1997). Kaehanggi han’guk sahoe ūi kŭrisŭtokyokwan kwa kŭrisŭtokyo ūi p’okyochŏnyak [The views on Christianity and its mission strategy during the Opening period]. *Han’guk sahoehakhoe sahoehak taehoe nonmunjip*, v.12, pp.219-221

²¹¹ Allen, H. N. (1908). *Things Korean: a collection of sketches and anecdotes, missionary and diplomatic*. New York, F.H. Revell, pp.184-185

²¹² Harrington, F. H. (1944). *God, mammon, and the Japanese; Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American relations, 1884-1905*. Madison, Wis, The University of Wisconsin Press, pp.90-91

²¹³ Yi, H.-W. (2010). Ūihwatan untong i hankuk kaesinkyo sŏnkyo hyŏnchang e mich’in yŏnghyang [The impact the Boxer Rebellion had on Korean Protestant mission activity]. *Han’guk kidokkyo wa yŏksa*, v.33, pp.215-251

In this period, one could discern very little incongruity between the recommendation on western missionaries to 'separate religion and politics' and at the very same time urging American government to force 'free admission and exercise of missionary endeavour where such admission is not now granted' on other 'uncivilised' nations.²¹⁴ Indeed when the American government unilaterally abrogated a treaty with Russia over the persecution against Jews in 1911, promoting and securing religious liberty became a full-fledged American foreign policy goal.²¹⁵ The board's admission that 'in the United States we have no right to ask our Government to favour Missions' because of 'the separation of church and state', but going to ask the indigenous governments to 'favour Missions as much as it favours commerce' is telling precisely because the argument is predicated 'upon the ground of humanity, on account of the proved beneficent influence of Missions and upon the common right of mankind to receive such benefits.'²¹⁶ For many, the mission boards' conviction that western missionaries ought to avoid political entanglement at all cost, in exchange for securing religious liberty, or 'freedom of conscience' epitomised the hypocritical double-standard maintained by the western powers. As such the modern students have been uncharitable with respect to what they consider a breach of explicit treaty provisions banning proselytisation, in addition to condescending behaviours grossly at variance with the spirit of Christian benevolence. But for American Protestant missionaries, the lack of protection on religious liberty posed not only a curb on the natural and constitutional right, but also implied the danger of religious establishment. Religious liberty was increasingly viewed as the stepping stone to achieving a united pluralistic religious front against Roman Catholicism.

²¹⁴ Report of Commission VII: Missions and Governments, with supplement: presentation and discussion of the Report in the Conference on 20th June 1910, p.149

²¹⁵ See Gunn, J. T. (2009). *Spiritual Weapons: the Cold War and the Forging of an American National Religion*. Westport, Connecticut, Praeger; Preston, A. (2012). *Sword of the spirit, shield of faith: religion in American war and diplomacy*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf; Su, A. (2015). *Exporting freedom: religious liberty and American power*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press

²¹⁶ Report of Commission VII: Missions and Governments, with supplement: presentation and discussion of the Report in the Conference on 20th June 1910, p.150

Under the presumption of separationism, the conventional literature holds that the deadlock between the top-down push for de-politicisation on the one hand, and the intense nationalistic fervour from below were cathartically resolved by a series of mass revival meetings in the mid-1900s, consumed by evangelical conservatism and combustible religious enthusiasm. A recent church historian account summarised this view succinctly: 'The Korean Revival was the confluence of the missionary evangelical tradition with the Korean hope for the salvation of the nation which moulded the Korean church into a national religion.'²¹⁷ For many, this marked a decisive turn to the normative model of 'a-political church' under the whims of Americans contrary to the wishes of Christian nationalists.²¹⁸ Church historians of nationalist persuasions, frustrated at the missionary efforts to dampen patriotic political activism in church, contended that the sudden call for separationism was nothing more than a ploy to clip the nationalist wing of the embryonic church under the epithet 'render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's'.²¹⁹

Under the two grindstones of separationism and nationalism, religious liberty has long been treated with suspicion. There is a fundamental interpretative gap between modern nationalist historians who perceive religious liberty as an imperialistic camouflage, and church historians who perceive de-politicisation and separationism as an appropriate, if ill-timed, move in keeping with modern state-church relationship. Taking into consideration the dominant framework of Protestant activism which viewed the American republic as the vehicle for furthering religious liberty around the globe, American Protestants at the turn of the century thought it government's moral duty to enforce and

²¹⁷ Kim, S. C. H., & Kim, K. (2015). *A history of Korean Christianity*. New York, Cambridge University Press, p.95

²¹⁸ Kim, C.-Y. (1997). Han'guk kidokkyo ga han'guk kundaehwa ui kach'igwan hyöngsöng e mich'in yönghyang [The impact Korean Protestantism had on the formation of Korean modernisation values]. *Changsin nondan*, v.13, p.263; Yang, N.-H. (2008). *Han'guk changno kyohoesa: hyöngsöng kwa punyöl kwajöng, hwahae wa ilch'i üi mosaek* [Korean Presbyterian church history: formation and schism, reconciliation and unity]. Söul, Saengmyöng üi Malssümsa, pp.154-155; Soh, C.-M. (2007). Han'guk kyohoe ch'ogi taepuhüng undong e taehan sahoechök panüng: sinmun, chapji üi panüng üi chungsim üro [Social reactions to the Korean Great Revival movement: with the focus on newspaper and magazines]. *Han'guk kidokkyo wa yöksa*, v.26, pp.103-104; Kang, T.-K. (1999). Han'guk küntae kaesin'gyo minjokjuüi üi chaeihae [Reassessing Korean modern Protestant nationalism]. *Chonggyo munhwa yön'gu*, v.1, pp.73-74

²¹⁹ Min, K.-B. (2008). *Han'guk minjok kyohoe hyöngsöng saron* [The theory on formation of Korean nationalistic church]. Söul T'ükpyölsi, Yönsae Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.50-51; Kang, W. J. (1997). *Christ and Caesar in modern Korea: a history of Christianity and politics*. Albany, State University of New York Press

implement 'natural rights'. For American missionaries, pressuring the government to align its policies with the opinions of the church, for instance abolishing slavery or blocking liquor traffic, was deemed consistent with the view of instrumentalising the state to promote the evangelical goals of exporting 'the progress of civil and religious liberty'.²²⁰ Those engaged in foreign mission saw a clear line connecting abolitionism with the first half of the nineteenth century with the struggle against any vestiges of Roman Catholic confessionalised colonies scattered in the Pacific and the Atlantic. With the end of the Spanish-American War in 1899 as a result of which the Philippines in the Pacific came under American control, the overwhelming sentiment amongst the American Protestants was that the republic of liberty was a divine instrument with which to eradicate the vestiges of Catholic empire spread across the Pacific.²²¹

As such, the interpretative accent on de-politicisation fundamentally mistakes the concomitant political push for religious liberty by the American missionaries. Only by placing religious liberty at the centre, not separationism, could one coherently comprehend the ideological undercurrent of contemporary American Protestant mission enterprise. Insofar as Roman Catholicism was construed as the engine of intolerance and the threat to religious liberty, pressuring local governments to ensure the freedom to practise their Protestant faith was considered the constitutional right. When the Presbyterian Church of the United State of America Board secretary Arthur J. Brown who proclaimed publicly that 'Japanese administration is far better than Korea would otherwise have had and far better than Korea had under its own rule', the American Protestant mission boards picked the most uncouth opportunity to publicise the extent to which they preferred the guarantee of religious liberty, enshrined in the Meiji constitution, which Japan was ready to supply.²²² Whilst the

²²⁰ Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian System, & Roberts, W. H. (1898). *Manual of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System: with a brief history of the Alliance*. Philadelphia, p.13; Kim, Y. (1999). Protestant Missions as Cultural Imperialism in Early Modern Korea: Hegemony and its Discontents. *Korea Journal*, v.39, n.4, p.71

²²¹ Salman, M. (2001). *The Embarrassment of Slavery: Controversies over Bondage and Nationalism in the American colonial Philippines*. Berkeley, University of California Press, Chapter 6

²²² Kang, W.-J. (2006). Church and State Relations in the Japanese Colonial Period. In (eds) Buswell, R. E., & Lee, T. S. *Christianity in Korea*. Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, p.98; Schmid, A. (2010). Two Americans in Seoul: evaluating an oriental empire, 1905-1910, *Korea Histories*, v.2

need to curb political radicalism inside Protestant organisations was genuinely felt particularly in the wake of violence against Christian missionaries and converts, this did not necessarily lead to a normative understanding with regard to separation of church and state *in situ* in this period.²²³

Chapter summary

In interpreting the ideological impact that American missionaries had on Korean political thought since their arrival in the 1880s, historians have taken little notice of the cultural and ideological contexts from which American Protestant political ideas hailed. Without taking this into consideration, attempts to assess the intellectual influences by American missionaries would face the wall of anachronism. In this chapter I assessed three themes relevant to intellectual understanding of the American Protestant missions in the second-half of nineteenth century: Christian republicanism, anti-Catholicism, and religious liberty. These themes were raised in relation to the commonly-held view that American Protestant missionaries introduced the principle of separation of church and state in line with the customary norm in the United States at that time. To frame the decision to renege on earlier commitment to Korean patriotic nationalism to the tactical application of the American principle of separation of church and state is deeply misleading. Instead, this chapter drew attention to the idea of disestablishment and religious liberty as the crux of the American Protestant political ideology in this period.

The heightened anxiety over the corrupting Romish absolutism incompatible with the Christian republican ideals by the American Protestants informed the normative relations between church and state in the nineteenth century. Widely thought of as an engine of despotism and ecclesiastical

(http://www.koreanhistories.org/files/Volume_2_2/KH2_2_Schmid_Two_Americans.pdf: last accessed July 12, 2016)

²²³ Kim, C.-Y. (1997). Han'guk kidokkyo ga han'guk kũndaehwa ũi kach'igwan hyõngsõng e mich'in yõnghyang [The impact of Korean Protestantism on the formation of modernity and modern values]. *Changsin nondan* v.13, p.261

oppression in contrast to religious tolerance unique to Protestantism, Roman Catholicism was viewed as the threat of religious establishment and an antithesis of republic of freedom. The Protestant home mission started before the Civil War in 1865 against the Roman Catholic immigrants in lower Mississippi and the West; their fear resurged again following the end of the Civil War in the 1860s. The religious recoil against Roman Catholicism in the United States was such that in the 1870s the US Supreme Court proclaimed Protestant Christianity as part of national religious culture. The meaning of separation of church and state which arose in the 1870s took on different meanings than the one conventional historiography suggests. The prevailing Protestants notion of church-state relationship in this period did not divine a strict separation between the two, and certainly not secularisation of state. Instead, the call for *Christianisation* of Korea by the Korean Protestant intellectuals such as Yun Ch'i-ho, Rhee Syngman and Philip Jaisohn, ought to be interpreted not as a political indiscretion and apologia for western religious hegemony. This view, in fact, was consistent with the contemporary American understanding of normative relationship between church and state, in practical terms, in which *political* Protestantism enjoying the status of informal establishment.

As a corollary to this development was the mid-century Protestant refashioning of an American republic committed to promote and propagate liberty across the world. This political context informed the American Protestant mission organisations to go abroad and demand legal recognition of religious liberty beyond the extraterritoriality. The adoption of 'political non-interference' policy by American missions in the 1900s did not signify a voluntary evacuation of church away from the formal realm of politics as simply, even less a principled rejection of politics in favour of purely spiritual preoccupation. Rather, the pursuit of religious liberty in tandem with the policy favouring religious toleration that would block the prospect of Catholic establishment became the American Protestant norm.

Having identified the host of contemporary American cultural anxieties and political biases travelled across the Pacific through the vehicle of the Protestant overseas mission, in the next chapter I will explain as to how these cultural features began to cohere around the idea of liberty, and describe the manner in which the ideas disseminated by the Anglo-American Protestant missionaries were received and interacted with the social and intellectual context of Chosŏn via the most consequential individuals of the 1890s, Philip Jaisohn and Yun Ch'i-ho.

Chapter 4: Politics sectionalised: Philip Jaisohn and Yun Ch'i-ho

In his two-part open letter to the people of the Taehan Empire in November of 1898, published in *Tongnip Sinmun* five months after his second exile in the wake of the growing popular agitations against the government which he himself had instigated, Jaisohn (K: 서재필; C: 徐載弼) reiterated the two key ideas on which he focused his indomitable intellectual and political energy. He argued that government is set up to protect the 'life and property of individuals', and that every individual is entitled to a set of rights authored by God – the former a moral theory as to how government and individual ought to relate to each other, and the latter a theological explanation of the origin of such rights. Jaisohn concluded his open letter with the urgent approval that the recent popular struggles in Korea was reflective of the growing appreciation of the divine rights in defence of which Koreans ought to 'rise up' so that they too could enjoy the same 'equality' as other civilised nations.²²⁴ In the very same issue a populist civic association in Seoul that grew out of Jaisohn's Independence Club [Kr: 독립 협회; C: 獨立協會] called the 'People's Assembly' [Kr: 만민 공동회; C: 萬民公同會], printed a memorial demanding that the king effectively submit to popular demands borne out of loyalty and patriotism.²²⁵

In a way this letter neatly serves as the bookend of Jaisohn's tumultuous return from exile that began with his editorial 'Patriotism and rebellion' in early April 1896 in which he re-defined the political relationship between the government and governed in terms of 'love' and 'law', rather than, say 'conscientious obedience' and 'loyalty'.²²⁶ Coming from one of the chief plotters of the *Kapsin Coup of 1884* as a result of which his entire family perished, to openly prescribe 'love' as the principal political duty – not conscientious obedience – and 'rebellion' as violation of law of reason

²²⁴ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Cheshon ssi p'yŏnji [Jaisohn's Letter]. November 17

²²⁵ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Pyŏlbo [miscellaneous]. November 17

²²⁶ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1896). Nonsŏl [editorial]. April 11

was not just to challenge the dominant Confucian moral and political ideational framework.²²⁷ It was, as his opponent astutely noted, to arouse the people to ‘revolt against the then existing regime’.²²⁸ Indeed, this suspicion may prove to be well-grounded because the vernacular newspaper, *Tongnip Sinmun* or the *Independent* was conceived by Jaisohn not so much to enlighten as to radicalise the mass against the Chosŏn government.²²⁹ Barely concealed in his message are not jumbled clichés of patriotic and nationalistic platitudes flattering to our modern sensibility, but combustible ideas concatenated in such a way to subvert the foundational values and fan the flame of political radicalism. For a man who had to transform himself into an American medical doctor – having obtained the first medical license at what is now George Washington University in 1893, mere eight years after arriving in San Francisco penniless and no knowledge of English – this was more than a gesture of supreme irony. It was an act of defiant vindication.²³⁰

Perhaps his protégé Liem Channing’s (Kr: 임창녕) apologetic assertion that Jaisohn was somehow favourable to ‘moderate monarchism’, as nonsensical as it sounds, comes closest to the historical actuality insofar as Liem *at least* hints at Jaisohn’s interaction with the king of Chosŏn against whom his entire political project was aimed.²³¹ Whilst a number of accounts recall Jaisohn’s open defiance against the royal authority, he is conventionally portrayed as generally detached and distant from

²²⁷ Jaisohn’s father and mother killed themselves whilst his older brother died in prison. (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_001r_0010_0120_0160; accessed 2016 June 25). His younger brother Sŏ Chae-ch’ang was executed. (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_001r_0010_0120_0110; accessed 2016 June 25).

²²⁸ Sŏ, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, p.122

²²⁹ See Note 220 below.

²³⁰ The *Kapsin Coup* of 1884 was a failed palace coup’état staged by the group of largely young, pro-Japanese reformists against the pro-Chinese court faction which lasted three days. See Ch’oe, Y.-H. (2011). The Kapsin Coup of 1884: A Reassessment. *Korean Studies*, v.6, pp.105-124; Duus, P. (1995). *The Abacus and the Sword: the Japanese penetration of Korea, 1895-1910*. Berkeley, University of California Press, p.67

²³¹ Liem, C. (1952). *America’s finest gift to Korea: the life of Philip Jaisohn*. New York, William-Frederick Press, pp.189-192

the immediacy of the contemporary social environment, utterly confident in the future Korean democratic nation-state that he is treated as a prophet on loan from America.²³²

As a consequence the spectrum of his political concerns and commitments is hardly registered except as the visible bandwidth of patriotic nationalism. So fixed has been the scholarly nadir on the topic of patriotic reformism in connection with the prognosis of the nation-state building that very little of his attitude with regard to the monarchical institution or the person of king has been considered relevant to the analysis of his political thought.²³³ That he may have had a very human, if somewhat distasteful, motive for his return is hardly plausible in the conventional accounts of Korean hagiography.

What motivated Jaisohn to return from the United States in Christmas of 1895 was his singular desire to terminate the Chosŏn dynasty without so much a thought as to what may succeed it. In this sense, Jaisohn was more a demolisher of the old regime than a builder of the new one. Echoing Jaisohn's claim that he was '[primarily] interested in the political and social reform of Korea at that time' with the economic agenda a distant second, I contend that Jaisohn's focal point rested on the prospect of destruction of the incumbent political institutions.²³⁴ Without a clear and firm grasp of this immediate and urgent political pursuit, it is impossible to understand Jaisohn's overall political project. Whilst his reform efforts were visible, the practical means by which he proposed to achieve this objective remained more elusive and private until two years later. I argue that Jaisohn carried out this objective by framing his assertions in the theologico-moral matrix of private property, labour

²³² Hwang Hyŏn left some of the most memorable records of Jaisohn's impertinent behaviours. See (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_001r_0060_0110_0340: accessed 2016 June 25) and (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_001r_0040_0010_0080: accessed 2016 June 25)

²³³ The nadir of academic research has always been on whether Jaisohn was funded by the Japanese or not in connection with his 'nationalist' enlightenment activities. See Yi, T.-Y. (2008). 'ch'inil' tongnip sinmun ch'angganil i sinmun ūi nal?. *OhMyNews*, April 6, (http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_View/view/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0000873048: accessed 2016 June 25); Han, C.-H. (1998). *Ch'inmi kaehwap'a yŏn'gu* [A study on pro-American reformers]. Sŏul-si, Kukhak Charyowŏn, pp.120-122; Chu, C.-O. (1986). Tongnip hyŏphoe ūi taoeinsik ūi kucho wa chŏnkae [The structure and development of the understanding of outside world held by Tongnip Hyŏphoe], *Haklim*, v.8, pp.77-78

²³⁴ Sŏ, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, p.46

and the Creative purpose fundamentally at odds with the contemporary ideological landscape in Chosŏn. Secondly, I will outline how Jaisohn, by deploying the amalgam of the Protestant normative theories as a powerful battery against the legitimist claims of the Chosŏn monarchy, succeeded in cornering the dynastic apologists into a profoundly awkward and unyielding position over the nature and extent of monarchical authority in Korea. Finally, by relentlessly pressing on the official corruption in Chosŏn Jaisohn was able to galvanise a sizeable segment of population into direct mass political action. By mid-1898 when Jaisohn was forced out for the second time, the extent to which Jaisohn had dedicated his energy to radicalise a Korean mass audience to direct political action and secure popular (largely urban) support for the revolutionary end was not lost on anyone in contemporary Chosŏn.

To this overarching goal Jaisohn consistently prescribed an interlocking set of ideas as political duties and moral imperatives to which not only the incumbent government but every individual must conform. If the significance of Jaisohn's presence in this historic conjuncture – generally considered second to none – is beyond dispute, the extent to which he attempted to convince his contemporaries of the relevance of Protestantism, not to mention the precise ways in which his political ideas are informed by Protestant theological resource, have not been taken into consideration. Jaisohn's efforts to provide the ideological impetus for overthrowing 'tyrannical' government as politically defensible if not morally desirable deeply impressed many young activists and intellectuals towards the idea of political radicalism in the late 1890s. By the time the government decided to remove Jaisohn, there already awaited a legion of young radicals in his place.

Just as Jaisohn was readying himself for the second exile from Chosŏn, Yun Ch'i-ho recorded in his diary one of his final meetings with Jaisohn who, whilst sceptical of any prospect for full-scale mass uprising against the government, expressed unconcealed delight in the news of growing popular

disturbances in Seoul.²³⁵ Always piqued by Jaisohn's blatant anti-monarchical sentiments, Yun recalled that when the news of Crown Prince Eui-wha's (Kr: 이강; c: 義親王 李垓) sexual diseases due to well-publicised escapades in New York and Roanoke in the United States reached Jaisohn, Jaisohn thanked God aloud that 'there will be no more of his race[!]' though he never clarified to what charitable act of God was owed the extinction of the royal blood line in Chosŏn.²³⁶

The evident disagreement Yun found himself in with Jaisohn is not just over Jaisohn's open irreverence but his singular devotion to politics. In spite of his deep contempt for the kingdom of 'treachery, tyranny and imbecility' Yun nonetheless remained loyal to the king and maintained his governmental post until the formal liquidation of the Chosŏn dynasty in 1910 by Japan.²³⁷

Immediately taking up the cabinet post upon his return from the United States in 1895 it was Yun who persuades his erstwhile associate Jaisohn to follow suit. That Jaisohn accepted the offer of royal clemency but pursued the path contrary to Yun has tended to invite not so much scholarly interest as moralistic charges of parochialism, opportunism and conformism.²³⁸

If for Jaisohn the cause of contemporary decline of Chosŏn was essentially remediable by politics, for instance by means of rehabilitating the divine rights or popular insurrection, for Yun Ch'i-ho such inflation of politics was not just tactically erroneous but downright immoral. If the sources of the moral corruption ailing Chosŏn were distressingly many – be they greed of magistrates, depraved foreign interests, ignorant apathy of Koreans – the likely remedy for Yun was an unenviable stretch

²³⁵ Yun, C.-H. *Diary*. (1898). March 10 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0030_0050: accessed 2016 June 25)

²³⁶ Yun, C.-H. *Diary*. (1898). May 2 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0050_0020: accessed 2016 June 25); For Prince Eui-wha's American adventure, see Neff, R. D., & Chŏng, S.-H. (2009). *Korea through Western eyes*. Seoul, Seoul National University Press, pp.397-406

²³⁷ Kim, H.-C., & Yun, C.-H. (1980). *Letters in exile: the life and times of Yun Ch'i-ho*. Oxford, Ga., Oxford Historical Shrine Society, p.128

²³⁸ Han, C.-H. (1998). *Ch'inmi kaehwap'a yŏn'gu* [A study on pro-American reformers] Sŏul-si, Kukhak Charyowŏn, Chapter 5; Chong, Y.-H. (2001). Munmyŏng kaehwaron ūi tŏt: Yunch'iho ilgi rŭl chungsim ūro [Trappings of Civilisational enlightenment: centred on Yun Ch'i-ho's diary]. *Kukje chŏngch'i nonch'on*, v.41, pp.297-314; Chong, Y.-H (2001). Chubyŏnbu chisikin ūi hŏwiŭisik [The hypocrisy of a peripheral intellectual]. *Tongasia pip'yŏng*, n.7, pp.5-16; Chu, C.-O. (1986). Tongnip hyŏphoe ūi taeyeinsik ūi kucho wa chŏnkae [The structure and development of the understanding of outside world held by Tongnip Hyŏphoe], *Haklim*, v.8

between 'impossible' and 'intolerable'.²³⁹ Politics, as voluntaristic determination between what is impossible and intolerable, offered 'no such hope' in Yun's estimate.²⁴⁰ Yun's apparent suspicion over Jaisohn's political voluntarism – no doubt rooted in his personal downfall following the *Kapsin Coup* in 1884 and the first-hand experience of post-Reconstruction South in the 1890s – seems fully justified in the wake of the mass protest in Seoul sparked by Jaisohn.²⁴¹ As early as 1890 Yun considered any political efforts for 'peaceful self-reformation and internal revolution' in Chosŏn as a foregone conclusion, a conviction that grew in strength with each passing year.²⁴² 'I will only work for the kingdom that perish not,' confided Yun to his mentor Young J. Allen of Shanghai, and not 'run after precarious politics.'²⁴³

This pessimism towards politics led Yun to drastically circumscribe the formal scope of governing class suitable for Chosŏn to the stewardship of 'patriotic and intelligent few' with the rest consigned to that of conscientious submission to inherited authority and established social hierarchy.²⁴⁴

Immersed in the postbellum Southern social and political experience between 1888 and 1895 Yun believed that 'progress' in politics does not necessarily warrant a concomitant socio-moral advancement; if anything there may even be an inverse correlation between material improvement and the pilgrim's progress. Man, freed though he may be from political oppressions and physical want, yet remains enslaved to destructive and corrupting nature, liable to inevitable corruption in society. With Jaisohn back to Philadelphia and the main populist radicals either behind bars or without heads by the beginning of 1899, Yun's political fortune confronted deep uncertainty.

²³⁹ Kim, H.-C., & Yun, C.-H. (1980). *Letters in exile: the life and times of Yun Ch'i-ho*. Oxford, Ga., Oxford Historical Shrine Society, p.101 (dated Jan 24, 1891)

²⁴⁰ Yun, C.-H. (1890). *Diary*. May 18 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0010_0050_0180: accessed 2016 June 25)

²⁴¹ For Jaisohn's own account of his involvement in Kapsin Coup, see Sŏ, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, p.177

²⁴² Yun, C.-H. (1890). *Diary*. May 18 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0010_0050_0180: accessed 2016 June 25)

²⁴³ Kim, H.-C., & Yun, C.-H. (1980). *Letters in exile: the life and times of Yun Ch'i-ho*. Oxford, Ga., Oxford Historical Shrine Society, p.101 (Letter by Yun, Jan 24, 1891 to Dr Allen).

²⁴⁴ Kim, H.-C., & Yun, C.-H. (1980). *Letters in exile: the life and times of Yun Ch'i-ho*. Oxford, Ga., Oxford Historical Shrine Society, p.128

Narrowly escaping several assassination attempts Yun was demoted to a northernmost post in 1899 until 1904, only to return to his cabinet position in 1905 to witness the end of the Taehan Empire.²⁴⁵

What ostensibly sets apart Jaisohn and Yun also unites the pair. From the editorial helm, the debating floor and the private entries of diaries, they thundered the account of a new type of politics reducible to a handful of axiomatic propositions reinforced by the new faith. Found consistently across their speeches and writings are the ideological coherence and metaphysical commitments that evince concerted efforts to articulate natural rights endowed by a Christian God and which no government on earth has the authority to abrogate. The condition of the Fall, the incorrigibility of man and the Revealed truth prove equally pertinent in the political visions of Jaisohn and Yun. The pair inexorably inaugurated a certain normative account of polity rooted in a kind of contractual relations warranted by the inalienable, natural rights available to all through Grace, but intelligible only to those who fully embrace Protestant Christianity. In the following section I will discuss how Jaisohn deployed the theologico-political ideas in a manner readily intelligible to the ordinary people whom he sought to convince.

God, property, and natural rights

The Creator of the Universe did not intend to make these fertile vallyes and the mineral deposits therein to be kept unused... They are made for whosoever makes use of them...

The Independent, November 12, 1896

²⁴⁵ See Yu, Y.-N. (2011). *Kaewhagi ūi Yun Ch'i-ho yŏn'gu* [A study on Yun Ch'i-ho during the enlightenment period]. Sŏul, Kyŏngin Munhwasa, pp.130-145; Kim, Y.-H. (1999). *Chwaong Yun Ch'i-ho Sŏnsaeng yakchŏn* [Yun Ch'i-ho biography]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Chwaong Yun Ch'i-ho Munhwa Saŏphoe, pp.157-170

Jaisohn's defence of private property has generated as much criticism as puzzlement since its first appearance in 1896. The above quote, remarking on the dispute over the construction of the South Manchuria Rail just north of the Korean border marked one of several of Jaisohn's editorials to champion the right of foreigners to 'intervene' in places where no other plan to capitalise its natural resources was forthcoming. At a glance, the message is an unambiguous if conventional capitalist apologia for western powers whose profit motives are seen to surreptitiously serve greater moral purpose.²⁴⁶ His uncompromising defence of property right, above all that of foreigners, sits uneasily with the celebrated enlightenment campaigns on hygiene, class abolition, education, penal and justice reform that earned Jaisohn the title of the 'founding father of modern Korea.'²⁴⁷ His vindication of foreigners' right to contest the *de facto* aborigines' right of ownership in terms of moral abdication and dereliction of duty on the part of the indigenous population strikes us as egregiously reckless given what was in store for Korea, leaving him open to longstanding charges of imperialism and social Darwinism.²⁴⁸ His explicit endorsement of foreign land grab on a religious ground further complicates the conventional secularist account of the nationalism of Jaisohn. In short it confounds the critics because the treatment of private property rights occupies the centre of his political thinking. It is puzzling because, as the above quote suggests, his theory of private property owed moral purchase to the template of divine instruction.

The theologico-moral imperative for commercial exchange to which this rhetoric was connected reveals the contour of his arguments to come for the next two years. Little, however, has been discussed in terms of the ways in which Jaisohn construes liberty, equality, and private property as

²⁴⁶ Chu, C.-O. (1986). Tongnip hyŏphoe ūi taewŏnsik ūi kucho wa chŏnkae [The structure and development of the understanding of outside world held by Tongnip Hyŏphoe], *Haklim*, v.8

²⁴⁷ See Chŏng, C.-S. (2014). *Sŏngakcha Sŏ Chae-p'il: minjok ūl wihan 'hŭimang ūi ssiat' ūl ppurida* = Dr. Philip Jaisohn. Sŏul-si, Kip'arang; Hong, S.-P. (2009). *Sŏ Chae-p'il: kaehwa tongnip minju ūi sam* [Sŏ Chae-p'il: the life of enlightenment, democracy and independence]. Hong, S.-P. (2009). *Sŏ Chae-p'il: kaehwa tongnip minju ūi sam* [Sŏ Chae-p'il: the life of enlightenment, democracy and independence]. Philadelphia, PA, Sŏ Chae-p'il Kinyŏm Chaedan; Cf. Kim, U.-T. (2010). *Kŭndae ūi se pŏnyŏkka: Sŏ Chae-p'il, Ch'oe Nam-sŏn, Kim Ŏk = Three translators in the early modern Korea*. Sŏul-si, Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an

²⁴⁸ Ch'oe, K.-Y. (2003). *Han'guk kŭndae kyemong sasang yŏn'gu* [A study on Korean modern enlightenment thought]. Sŏul-si, Ilchogak, p.23; Chŏn, P.-H. (1996). *Sahoe chinhaewaron kwa kukka sasang: ku Hanmal ūl chungsim ūro* [Social Darwinism and state philosophy: with the focus on late Chosŏn]. Sŏul-si, Hanul, pp.117-119

the axiomatic values to which every Korean must be attentive and in defence of which one must be ready to lay down one's life. Construing a moral case out of such a seemingly innocuous developmental lag strikes us as gratuitous unless one takes into consideration a tenet that assigns the highest political priority to property and this moral condition originates from the Creator.²⁴⁹ Surely Jaisohn's intent was not to call into question the 'juridical ownership' of the native's lands as such, let alone to justify some kind of a semi-colonial arrangement. The underlying rationale for the canonisation of private property was far from utilitarian calculus mixed with possessive individualism. Rather the political cogency of private property in this context was precisely so that the theological teleology informing private property and civil government could be highlighted. Over the ensuing two years Jaisohn committed himself to a task of elaborating a chain of causal links that calls for radical political actions justifiable on the ground of private property instantiated by the Christian Higher Law. In short, it was first and foremost a calculated move to invite his audience to reconsider the meaning of private property and to what extent existing government enjoys legitimate claim over individual's property.

Once we recognise the centripetal force of theological reasoning in Jaisohn's political thinking his implicit point that human political arrangements obtain their legitimacy from the fulfilment of the divine purposes becomes clear. Without hesitation Jaisohn maintains this world is a gift of God *tout court*, created for our exploit.²⁵⁰ Calling into question the practical judgment of the Creator who denies the very things He created for our enjoyment except by the sweat of the brow is to miss the point. The move to explicitly fuse the empirical claims about this world with the status of determinate jural ownership over the buried riches could only privilege the act of removing it from the earth. Simply put, God hid wealth in the earth to instruct man of the virtue of labour. The circular logic that awkwardly blends a theological proposition (God gave this world for our

²⁴⁹ *The Independent*. (1896). Editorial, Aug 4. To this gratuitous moralism what are without a doubt the first Shakespearean verses in Korean history was applied: 'The dram of evil doth all the noble substance of a doubt to his own scandal'. *Hamlet* I.4.2.

²⁵⁰ See Sö, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Yonsei University Press, p.239

enjoyment) with the divine empirical arrangement (God condemned humanity to the condition of scarcity) is precisely to highlight the moral imperative of labour.²⁵¹ As Jaisohn put it, government is only as good as the 'opportunities for the people to make a living by hard work'.²⁵²

Hence labour not only produces material sustenance with which to subsist in this world but translates into the normative condition for exclusive possessive claim. Private property arising from this condition of scarcity is a manifestation of God's penultimate charity for humanity after the expulsion from Eden. As such property enjoys a dual status as that to which labour gives rise *de facto* as well as a *de jure* divine right of subsistence. That such a divine teleology manifests to humanity as a natural *entitlement* to private property is the basic building block of Jaisohn's political ideology. The simple but effective Christian theological axiom – that Man is *obliged* to labour but *entitled* to the inalienable right to private property in return and one is duty-bound to preserve oneself against any external threats and encroachment against such a gift – was at the heart of Jaisohn's political message throughout this period. Independence, Jaisohn argued many times over, could only be secured when everyone in Korea learned this lesson and respect private property.²⁵³ The profound shift in perception regarding private property is captured in the anecdote that *The Independent* published in the summer of urban protests:

The late Tai Won Kun, when building the Kyengbok [sic] Palace, made it go hard with the rich folks of the land by compelling them to make "voluntary offerings" for the work. One day, a man living in Hankang was brought to the awful presence of the then omnipotent regent who said, in tone of irresistible authority, "Are you rich?" "Yes, Sir," replied the man. "Then give me 100,000 yang," demanded the Regent. "No, Sir." calmly said the fellow, "I am rich, that is true, but I haven't a penny to give you. As a subject I have the right to enjoy the fruit of my labor, and

²⁵¹ *The Independent*. (1896). Editorial, August 11

²⁵² Sö, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, p.46

²⁵³ *The Independent*. (1896). Editorial, August 4; *The Independent*. (1896). Editorial, August 6

as a ruler you have no business to rob me of my property. Take my life if you want to, but my money you shall not touch a penny of it." The regent, so the story runs, was astonished but no less delighted at the courage of the man and let him go without further molestation.²⁵⁴

One ought to bear in mind that Jaisohn's audience would have been entirely unfamiliar with the theological information to which Jaisohn's presentation of private property referred.²⁵⁵ Nothing in the Confucian (or Buddhist) canonical writings avail themselves to corroborate or contradict this extraordinary information regarding the Creative intention. The ways in which Christianity was presented as the religion of *truth* in contrast to the 'adoration of forms, the idolatry of words' of Confucianism is noted earlier.²⁵⁶ Jaisohn maintained that the natural rights and the resultant contract, however historically implausible and sociologically obscure for the Koreans, would become intelligible through the Scripture, which would stir the innate ideas acquired through sensory data that would clarify the necessary relationship between empirical knowledge and the divine reason.

In other words, Jaisohn inflated the divine purpose of the Creation (private property and labour) so as to draw attention to the fact of *customary and prevailing* occupancy of land in Chosŏn, thereby calling it into question. Over and over, he suggested that the claim to the incumbent occupancy is valid and lawful only to the extent that it serves to fulfil the obligation of the natural right and the social contract for which civil government was established. No amount of intervening time or human authority could prejudice the original contract or divine intention, and, as such, human history (and therefore the pattern of established land occupancy) possessed no direct relevance in evaluating the moral status of a given political regime for Jaisohn. This resolutely a-historic approach distinguishes

²⁵⁴ *The Independent*. (1898). Odds and Ends, May 19

²⁵⁵ The complete translation of the New Testament was not until 1904. The Old Testament became only available in 1911. See Taehan Sŏngsŏ Konghoe. (1993). *Taehan Sŏngsŏ Konghosa* [Taehan Bible Society]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Taehan Sŏngsŏ Konghoe

²⁵⁶ *The Independent*. (1896). Editorial, August 6

him from his contemporaries. As Chapter 6 shows, it was precisely on this ground of history that Christian intellectuals successfully levied claims over their Confucian legitimist rivals. Many missionaries and converts at this point were convinced that, had this Scriptural information been available, Koreans would have never fallen behind on the civilisational scale. This moralistic perspective allowed many to imagine the contemporary national turmoil a kind of divine sanction to humble the stubborn and hoary nation into the new faith.²⁵⁷

In contrast, Jaisohn never indulged in this kind of historical speculation; nor did he ever evaluate the divine intention simply on the basis of the prevailing social situation, as Yun Ch'i-ho was predisposed to do. For Jaisohn the moral disposition of the Creator remains extremely murky particularly when called upon to clarify the reality of late nineteenth-century Korea. Outlined as such, Jaisohn turned around the conventional understanding of private property over which the civil authority in Chosŏn hitherto enjoyed rather straightforward dominium to a paradigmatic form of inalienable right in virtue of which civil government came into being.²⁵⁸ Under this new evaluative schema, it is not difficult to see Jaisohn presented a line of thought whose logical conclusion was a revolutionary political action, rather than a historical contemplation into the existing political order.

As such Jaisohn's privileging of private property was to inflame the sense of outrage against the inequity of the contemporary social conditions to which vast bulk of Koreans were seemingly acquiescent, not to condemn the epistemological ineptitude of the people. Jaisohn's persistent focus on calling the political authority in violation of this right 'despotic' and those subject to this 'slaves' was to shift the ground on which political radicalism could be staged. His messages were neither to convince the non-Christian audience nor to pre-empt the private accumulative economy. Its intention was to pave the ground for the political offensives that Jaisohn was to trigger in the summer and autumn of 1898.

²⁵⁷ See Chapter 6, n.34

²⁵⁸ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsŏl [editorial], May 21

Slavery and despotism

Jaisohn fashioned his political message in a string of simple propositions unambiguously contending that the most sacrosanct obligation is the duty to protect one's property as prescribed by God. All other duties and rights arise from this single divine axiom. Issuing from private property as *natural* entitlement and labour as attendant obligation is the outline of true and lawful purpose of civil governments, namely to safeguard private property of individuals. The outline of his argument frequently suggested that private property precedes the establishment of civil government. Arising from this analytic account of civil government was the theory of social contract through which existing political authority was (supposedly) constituted and to which civil magistrate is jurally bound. The degree to which the civil magistracy implements and executes laws consistent with the regime of private property determines the moral *and* legal merit of a political regime.

From the vantage point of Jaisohn the incumbent regime in Korea could not be farther from the ideal situation. The fact that Jaisohn insisted on the relevance of contract as the key normative source of civil government has been widely taken note of as has his commitment to modern democratic and liberal values.²⁵⁹ This anachronistic interpretation misses the whole point of Jaisohn's polemical exercise, often stylised in his bombastic fashion. The rhetorical excess was to bring to attention the chasm between the ideal norm and its actual existence, for at the other end of the property-based contractarian regime stood the absolutist type in which the individual right to property is completely abrogated and subject to arbitrary rules. Denying this fundamental natural right reduced the subjects to the condition of slaves, forsooth. Thus for Jaisohn the proclamation of

²⁵⁹ Most recently see Lee, C.-S. (2003). *Kuhanmal ūi kaehyŏk, tongnip t'usa Sŏ Chae-p'il* [Sŏ Chae-p'il, the fighter for independence and enlightenment]. Sŏul, Sŏul Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, Chapter 7; Yi, T.-H. (1993). *Sŏ Chae-p'il*. Sŏul, Minŭmsa, Chapter 1; Chŏng, C.-S. (2014). *Sŏngakcha Sŏ Chae-p'il: minjok ūl wihan hŭimang ūi ssiat' ūl ppurida* [Trailblazer Sŏ Chae-p'il: sowing the seeds of hope for the nation]. Sŏul-si, Kip'arang; Sin, P.-N., & Kim, Y.-D. (2003). *Sŏ Chae-p'il kwa kŭ sidae* [Sŏ Chae-p'il and his age]. Seoul, Sŏ Chae-p'il Kinyŏmhoe; Hong, S.-P. (2009). *Sŏ Chae-p'il: kaehwa tongnip minju ūi sam*; Sŏ, C.-P. (2013). *Chaju tongnip minju kaehyŏk ūi sŏn'guja, Sŏ Chae-p'il = Seo Jae-pil, a leader for autonomous independence and democratic reformation*. Seoul, Han'guk Kodŭng Sinhak Yŏn'guwŏn

the Taehan Empire in October of 1897 whereby the new emperor 'officially' annexes a vast array of 'absolutistic' prerogatives over his subjects could not have come at a more opportune time.²⁶⁰ From his public encounter with a Confucian scholar who reportedly proclaimed that 'Korea belonged to the king and the people in Korea also to him' Jaisohn retorted that 'kings may come and go, but the people are always there. Hence the land on which they live belongs to them'.²⁶¹

When these interlocking ideas were presented as above the intention is clear: unlawful expropriation of private property by the ruling authority, however customary, nevertheless was robbery. And the state in which one is disempowered to safeguard one's property is a condition of slavery. What is more, stealing with impunity the fruits of labour debased those subject to it, reducing them to the condition of someone else's property, viz. slave. It mattered little for his political purpose whether the abuse manifested in the form of royal or official despotism, as the widespread state of governmental license induced the condition of slavery.²⁶² The widespread acceptance of slavery as part of customary social arrangement in Chosŏn went hand in hand with the form of government in which few possessed the power to lawfully rob. According to Jaisohn, complementing this absolutist official ideology of the regime was the ubiquitous practice of tax-farming officials in Korea. Sanctioning such deliberate disregards for individual property by the governing authority, wrote Jaisohn amounts to a 'legal form of robbery' and the officials simply 'merchants of human meat'.²⁶³ This was doubly scandalous because government officials were meant to be 'the servants of the people', not its oppressor.²⁶⁴ Continuous subjection to this

²⁶⁰ For the history of Korean Empire, see Sö, Y.-H. (2003). *Taehan Cheguk chŏngch'isa yŏn'gu* [A study on Taehan Empire politics]. Söul, Söul Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, Chapter 1 and 2; Yi, Y.-N. (2006). *Uri hŏnpŏp ŭi t'ansaeng: hŏnpŏp ŭro pon Taehan Min'guk kŏn'guksa* [The birth of our constitution: the founding of the Republic of Korea as seen through the constitution]. Kyŏnggi-do P'aju-si, Sohae Munjip, pp.44-48

²⁶¹ Sö, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Yonsei University Press, p.32

²⁶² *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsöl [editorial], Nov 1

²⁶³ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsöl [editorial], March 13

²⁶⁴ *The Independent*. (1896). Editorial, November 21

fundamental encroachment against one's inalienable natural right was not merely intolerable; it necessarily '*corrupts*'.²⁶⁵

In outlining this Jaisohn completed the polemical encirclement of Chosŏn government as essentially illegitimate and *unnatural*. The reported state of license to which the contemporary Chosŏn governance had fallen was according to this theoretical rubric tantamount to the monarch's forfeiting the right to rule. Despotism and rampant official corruption, both of which abrogate the fruits of individual labour, annuls the governing authority, and nullified the social contract. From there on the regime may be subject to lawful popular censure.

The brutal simplicity with which he asserted the logical necessity for political change and radical action was matched by the palpable urgency to elicit popular support, appealing as much to their immediate material interests as to their sense of political and moral duty. Despite the obvious reticence of spelling out of the full political action, his readers and audience were able to draw the final conclusion themselves perfectly well. When students at a meeting chaired by Jaisohn in February 1898 openly cried out that 'His Maj. is a slave' and along with him the entire nation, one needs not strain too much to get the drift of this explosive rhetoric.

A Christian Revolution

When this younger generation absorbs the new idea and trains itself in Christian Civilization,
nobody knows what blessings are in store for Korea.²⁶⁶

Where does all this leave Jaisohn? By the end of his Korean sojourn in 1898 it was apparent that Jaisohn no longer entertained even the nominal veneer of deference towards the monarch who

²⁶⁵ Sŏ, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, p.38

²⁶⁶ Jaisohn, P. (1896). What Korea Needs Most. *The Korean Repository*, v.3, n.3, p.110

‘recognised none of the fundamental and inalienable rights’.²⁶⁷ To issue a public indictment that the monarch of Chosŏn was no longer sovereign in his realm would have been audaciously treasonous. To impugning the emperor of Chosŏn a mere ‘slave’ and the entire nation with him into a state of servitude in a public speech as Yun recorded as having been loudly proclaimed by the audience, would have been openly insurrectionary.²⁶⁸ All this clearly upset the king as Speyer recalled that he ‘never saw the King so indignant as when he spoke of Jaisohn. The King’s face became red with anger’.²⁶⁹

With regard to his contention that Chosŏn dynasty has essentially violated the very *raison d’être* of civil government is originally set up along with the ‘contract’, the popular response was to prove explosive to say the least. The political implications of Jaisohn’s assertions hardly need spelling out where he directly assailed the fountainhead of the royal authority. Amongst his audience the idea that the existent political authority in Korea was severely compromised to the point of illegitimacy rapidly gained ground. Under Jaisohn’s political tutelage the rabble-rousers at the Independent Club and the young radicals at *Hyŏpsŏnghoe* began to adopt Jaisohn’s tone of condescension against the king and the government. Arguing that private property lies at the heart of political legitimacy would have been no less subversive than to maintain that all civil authority derives from the Creator.

Sensing the window of opportunity for mass mobilisation, which Yun naively perceived as ‘the waves of democracy... faintly beating on the rocky shores of Korean [sic] politics’, Jaisohn immediately intensified the anti-governmental campaign in February of 1898 under the pretext of opposing the government concession to Russia.²⁷⁰ The mounting popular discontents were quickly seized and channelled into three main routes: *Tongnip Sinmun*, the Independent Club, the original civic

²⁶⁷ Sö, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, p.59

²⁶⁸ Yun, C.H. (1898). *Diary*. February 13 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0020_0050: accessed 2016 June 25)

²⁶⁹ Yun, C.H. (1897). *Diary*. October 12 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0001_0100_0040: last accessed 2016 June 25)

²⁷⁰ Yun, C.H. (1898). *Diary*. February 27 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0020_0120: accessed 2016 June 25)

association group behind disseminating and amplifying the popular discontent, and finally the People's Assembly, founded in the second week of March 1898 by Rhee Syngman to apply further pressure against the government.²⁷¹ From the Independent Club's issuing a humble petition to the king about 'how flagrantly his ministers have violated his solemn promises which he made in his ancestral temple... in [1894]' to openly challenging the ministerial decision to concede the Deer Island (Kr: 절영도) to Russia for coaling station in the same month, the Independence Club was set to a direct collision course with the government. The government, in turn, allegedly hired assassins to 'do away with the leaders of the Club' by early March of 1898.²⁷²

Roughly around the same time Jaisohn published a lengthy editorial describing the assassination of Caesar in which he had Brutus justify his action on the ground that 'the fame and achievements notwithstanding, the plot to destroy our democracy and re-establish a monarchy' deserved a radical heroism.²⁷³ This was followed by another editorial in which Jaisohn asserted outright that 'the year of *Kapsin* was to free Chosŏn from the yoke of China', thereby openly exonerating the earlier *coup* attempt in 1884, adding that 'owing to the sacred virtue of the Emperor with the help of God the sentiment in Korea has finally awoken to the right of independence and freedom.'²⁷⁴ The final ideological reckoning was by an editorial by Yun Ki-chin, a self-declared member of the Independence Club who narrated a story of Polish minister named 'Rogimiri' who, when forced to sign the territorial concession deal to Russia by the king refused and proclaimed that 'I am a servant of the kingdom of Poland and will remain a ghost of the kingdom of Poland when I die'.²⁷⁵

²⁷¹ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Chapbo [miscellaneous]. March 13

²⁷² Yun, C.H. (1898). *Diary*. February 7 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0020_0020: last accessed 2016 June 25); Yun, C.H. (1898). *Diary*. February 27 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0020_0120: last accessed 2016 June 25); Yun, C.H. (1898). *Diary*. March 7 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0030_0030: last accessed 2016 June 25)

²⁷³ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsŏl [editorial], March 1

²⁷⁴ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsŏl [editorial], March 17

²⁷⁵ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsŏl [editorial]. March 31. The Polish minister in question is in all likelihood Tadeusz Rejtan and the king Stanisław August Poniatowski. I am grateful to Vince Garton for this information.

When Jaisohn was forced out of Korea for the second time in late April, *Tongnip Sinmun* lost all its editorial restraint, with an editorial in April declaring that ‘those working their fingers to bones are the guiltiest of them all in Chosŏn; for when magistrates find out the wealth he produced he will charge him every conceivable crime to take everything he has... This is why the people in this kingdom are deprived and forever poor. Officials rob any motivation for hard work... and the people steal from each other in imitation of officials.’²⁷⁶ Very little of this was lost on foreign observers stationed in Chosŏn with the French-American diplomat Le Gendre gravely warning Yun Ch'i-ho that there may soon be ‘a popular revolution here which may vie with the French revolution in its bloody excess.’²⁷⁷

Whilst Yun thought that the people still ‘incapable of raising and maintaining a respectable and orderly insurrection’, Jaisohn’s radicals were to prove him wrong in less than a week.²⁷⁸ When a group of young men publicly proposed to form an assembly, whose job was not ‘administrate but *deliberate*’ to balance the wicked cabinet in order that ‘His Majesty draw a fair assessment’, the clash was coming to head.²⁷⁹ In response to this Kim Yong-chun’s trepidation is instructive when he warned Yun Ch'i-ho that ‘...the king is supreme in our land. To question his acts would be introducing *democracy* here.’²⁸⁰ This was quickly followed by the news of Jaisohn’s dismissal and expulsion, which in turn prompted the formation of what Yun Ch'i-ho contemptuously called ‘the *representatives of the people*’ (Kr: 만민 공동회; c: 萬民公同會) in an open defiance of the king.²⁸¹ In this momentous occasion the *Tongnip Sinmun* published an open letter from the very ‘representatives’ in which Jaisohn is for the first time referred to by his Korean name ‘Seo Chae-pil’, imploring the

²⁷⁶ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsŏl [editorial], April 19; *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Chapbo [miscellaneous], March 29

²⁷⁷ Yun, C.-H. (1898). *Diary*. April 14 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0040_00200: accessed 2016 June 25)

²⁷⁸ Yun, C.-H. (1898). *Diary*. May 1 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0050_0010: accessed 2016 June 25)

²⁷⁹ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsŏl [editorial], April 40 (my emphasis)

²⁸⁰ Yun, C.-H. (1898). *Diary*. March 28 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0030_0140: accessed 2016 June 25) (my emphasis)

²⁸¹ Yun, C.-H. (1898). *Diary*. May 5 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0050_0030: accessed 2016 June 25)

monarch to overturn his decision. Jaisohn, with unconcealed contempt, placed the blame on 'your government'.²⁸²

For the young Christian radicals this verbal and written altercation was a declaration of war that they longed for and responded as such. In the next issue of the *Tongnip Sinmun* the editor issued what was effectively an insurrection. 'Those who have not lost the sacred idea given by God may be few', wrote the *Tongnip Sinmun* editor 'but when the irreconcilable cannot find a peaceful solution force will resolve the issue.' Pointing out that 'the divine reason is not that the many suffer the few..., the nation ought to protect the property and lives of all equally.' The author emphatically concluded the piece with declaration that 'the men of honour and glory ought to brave death', for 'Jesus conquered even those who killed him.'²⁸³

Under the more familiar rubric of Confucian rhetoric in which loyalty signified the highest political virtue, by this point one could trace the outline of a distinctive political thinking to which Jaisohn gave rise which assimilated political authority with the right of individual property and normative understanding of government whose job was to protect with whom it had 'covenanted'.²⁸⁴ Just as Jaisohn prophetically counselled in April of 1896, this marked the fundamental departure, at least amongst those who formed the 'representatives of the people' – presumably the very people the monarch alienated through misrule – that the idea of loyalty was no longer owed exclusively to the person of emperor.²⁸⁵ The level of popular agitation in March of 1898 was such that Yun was constantly on the guard lest the 'people at once become a turbulent mob'. It, however, made Jaisohn rather exuberant, though apprehensive that 'people *will not be able to* carry out their menace.'²⁸⁶

²⁸² *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsöl [editorial], May 5

²⁸³ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsöl [editorial], May 7

²⁸⁴ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsöl [editorial], May 7

²⁸⁵ Cf. *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1896). Nonsöl [editorial], April 11

²⁸⁶ Yun, C.-H. (1898). *Diary*. March 10 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0030_0050; accessed 2016 June 25) (my emphasis)

Jaisohn and political theology

If one is to sketch his political thought in more familiar terms, the most accurate label would be that of a ‘postbellum Christian radical natural legalism’, or ‘radical religious enlightenment’ more bluntly. For a number of reasons, many students have interpreted the term ‘heaven-given rights’ (Kr: 천부인권론; C: 天賦人權論) to something like positive civil rights implicit in the traditional Confucian normative structure. Left out of the consideration in the literature is that possibility that Korean intellectuals would have had either the intellectual resource or religious inclination to comprehend the full ideational implications of rights.²⁸⁷ As noted in Chapter 2, the conventional interpretations have suggested either the statist discourse through which ‘evanescent’ meaning of rights gained concrete reality (‘the might is right’ position); or the Anglo-Saxon liberal imperialism-cum-social Darwinist discourse at odds with the Christian theological framework the missionaries disseminated. But Jaisohn’s comments explicitly addressed the authority of the Christian God (Kr: 하나님) who ‘bestowed the rights on us’ and in turn the people must ‘dispatch anyone who rudely tries to insult that right’.²⁸⁸ This was consistently the crux of the political lesson that Jaisohn promoted in Chosŏn. Out of this simplified message was forged the pedagogic aim of changing from conscientious obedience to one’s civil superior to ones actively resisting civil magistracy and temporal sovereign on the ground of ‘inalienable rights bestowed by God’.²⁸⁹ [Due] to the ignorance of their birth-rights as citizens of the Commonwealth’, argued Jaisohn, the Koreans had been for centuries unaware that

²⁸⁷ See for instance, Yu, Y-R. (1973). Tongnip hyŏphoe ŭi minkwŏn sasang yŏn’gu [A study on Tongnip Hyŏphoe’s understanding of civic rights]. *Sahak yŏn’gu = The Review of Korean History*, pp.35-80; Ch’oe, K.-Y. (2003). *Han’guk kŭndae kyemong sasang yŏn’gu* [A study on modern Korean enlightenment thought] Sŏul-si, Ilchogak, p.23; Pak, C.-S. (1992). *Han’guk kŭndae chŏngch’i sasangsa yŏn’gu: minjokjuŭi up’a ŭi sillyŏk yangsŏng undongnon* [A study on modern Korean political thought: the right nationalist discourse on self-empowerment]. Sŏul, Yŏksa Pip’yŏngsa, p.38; Chŏng, Y.-H. (2004). *Munmyŏng ŭi chŏngch’i sasang: Yu Kil-chun kwa kŭndae Han’guk* [The political thought of civilisation: Yu Kil-chun and modern Korean political thought]. Sŏul, Munhak kwa Chisŏngsa, pp.327-331. Cf. Yun, C.-H. (1890). *Diary*. February 14 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0010_0020_0140: accessed 2016 June 25)

²⁸⁸ Jaisohn, P. (1898). Jaeson ssi p’yŏnji (chŏnho yŏnsok) [A letter from Jaisohn (continuing from the last issue)]. *Tongnip Sinmun*, November 17

²⁸⁹ *The Independent*. (1897). Editorial, March 9

‘all men are born equal before the eyes of Almighty God.’²⁹⁰ Though the principle of moral equivalence across humanity was already expounded by the Roman Catholics nearly a century earlier in Chosŏn, framing the possessive claims of individual private property in terms of jural right explicitly sanctioned by the divine creator was a complete novelty. If the Catholic line of inquiry hinged on the theological disposition of such a creator, the translation of the theological reasoning into concrete political demands was a distinctively Protestant contribution. The central thrust of Jaisohn’s efforts to radicalise the Korean ‘mass’ was hinged on the plausibility of natural rights theory predicated on this Protestant theological reference point. The ‘axiomatic truth that the people make leaders and not leaders the people’ was not a rhetorical lip service to secular liberal democracy *per se* but a theological prescription designed to demonstrate the condition of creaturely equality instituted by God.²⁹¹

The repeated emphasis on the previous failure indicates on the part of Jaisohn the real need to secure the popular support behind his manoeuvre; pedagogy or demagoguery was simply a tactical choice. Jaisohn was well aware as early as August of 1896 that he did not ‘expect the Korean nation to throw off its indifference with a convulsive jerk or to be suddenly galvanized into an active adoption of the methods and means of Western Civilization.’²⁹² In his first published article in 1896 Jaisohn staked out explicitly that what Korea needs most is an opportunity of education that would facilitate the ideas and values of ‘Christian civilisation’.²⁹³ In this sense education meant fleshing out political vocabularies whose manifest meanings are only intelligible on the acceptance of Christian God. From the popular perspective ‘the only remedy is the unceasing and steady diffusion of knowledge of facts about things, the persistent education of the people by every means at our

²⁹⁰ *The Independent*. (1896). Editorial, December 5

²⁹¹ Sŏ, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Yonsei University, p.26

²⁹² *The Independent*. (1896). Editorial, August 6

²⁹³ Jaisohn, P. (1896). What Korea Needs Most. *The Korean Repository*, v.3, p.306. If one were to go by Jaisohn’s word, it is clear that Jaisohn had a plan to start *Tongnip Sinmun* even before consulting the Korean counterpart. Jaisohn confesses that he acquired the printing press in Osaka funded by the Japanese without any arrangement with either Yu Kil-jun or Yi Wan-yong. See Sŏ, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Yonsei University, p.26. Cf. Han, C.-H. (1998). *Ch’inmi kaehwap’a yŏn’gu* [A study on Pro-American enlightenment faction]. Sŏul-si, Kukhak Charyowŏn, pp.120-123

disposal.²⁹⁴ It is worth quoting in full the description Jaisohn himself gave in explaining his motive for returning: 'Then it is an axiomatic truth that the people make leaders and not leaders the people. Having been convinced of the truth of this theory, I made up my mind to become a *political evangelist* to preach the truth to the Korean people. With this idea I went to Korea in December 1895 and arrived in Seoul on the first day of January 1896, unannounced.'²⁹⁵

This certainly did not escape the astute attention of Karl Ivanovich Waeber, the first Russian consul general to Chosŏn who directly warned against Jaisohn that 'the importance of education or the rights of people' on the ground that 'the former makes people discontented and the latter breeds revolutionary ideas'.²⁹⁶ For Jaisohn the goal of pedagogy was to awaken and radicalise the mass by means of political education calibrated to appeal to the individual 'interests'.²⁹⁷ When Jaisohn replied in an interview that the true purpose of the *Tongnip Sinmun* was 'to educate the people in such matters so that they may some day [sic] select their rulers who can and will do the right things for the masses' so that the common people 'can distinguish... real patriotism from blind obedience [sic] to the king' this statement ought to be assessed as revolutionary in its true voluntaristic meaning rather than a term of abuse.²⁹⁸

For Jaisohn Christianisation was not a practical expedient by which to modernise or westernise Korea but a theological prescription to which Chosŏn must heed in order to break the shackle of absolutism of Chosŏn. His conviction in the capacity for national progress was no mere soothing words for the battered nation or the hubris of nationalism. The inalienable, God-given right by virtue of which the social contract formed and the civil government constituted, however degenerate it had become, *pointed to* the Protestant theological vision in this intellectual context. The source of moral duty of civil government in Jaisohn's writings has to be assessed in view of this theological

²⁹⁴ *The Independent*. (1896). Editorial, August 6

²⁹⁵ Sö, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, p.26 (my emphasis)

²⁹⁶ Yun, C.-H. (1897). *Diary*. July 2 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0001_0070_0020: accessed 2016 June 25)

²⁹⁷ *The Independent*. (1896). Editorial, Aug 6

²⁹⁸ Sö, C.-P., & Hong, S.-P. (1999). *My days in Korea and other essays*. Seoul, Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, p.115

substratum, particularly with much of his political projects inextricably predicated on the Protestant Christianisation. This revolutionary Christian ideology finds its reverse image in Yun Ch'i-ho whose view on Christianity and western civilisation deeply was marked by the sectional experience in the American South in the 1890. The next section will highlight how Yun's Southern experience cast deep uncertainty over the idea of the Christian progress.

Yun Ch'i-ho and the American South

Just as Jaisohn, Yun Ch'i-ho fled abroad immediately following the failed *Kapsin Coup* in 1884, first to Japan and China where he briefly attended the Anglo-Chinese college in Shanghai, and finally to Tennessee and Georgia, USA in 1888 with the support of the Southern Methodist mission board.²⁹⁹ At Vanderbilt University and later at Emory University between 1888 and 1893 Yun obtained the degree in English with the view to returning to Korea as a native evangelist. This personal trajectory, documented by his meticulous diary-keeping and correspondence, reveals a rich tapestry of historical events, evolving political ideas, personal impressions, social prejudices, and religious convictions powerfully shaped by his Southern experience full of 'orations and declamations about Jackson, Lee, southern chivalry etc [sic]'.³⁰⁰

Above all, Yun encountered in the South in the 1880s and 1890s a society profoundly beset by racial inequity and social tension, where the 'hatred of Yankee' was as vehement 'as prejudice against the freedmen following the end of Reconstruction in the late 1870s'.³⁰¹ His diary gives graphic details regarding the racial and political tension, as when his close white friend assured him that he would rather 'die fighting than let a nigger rule over him'.³⁰² Yun was unlucky enough to arrive in the American South when the prewar paternalistic white racism gave way to open violence, though, to our constant amazement, he rationalised this hostile cultural surrounding. This was the period when the South began to wrest away the federal oversight and radical black Republicans in the name of

²⁹⁹ For the biographical overview see Chwaong yun ch'i-ho munhwa saŏphoe. (1998). *Yun Ch'i-ho ūi saengae wa sasang* [The life and thought of Yun Ch'i-ho]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Ŭryu Munhwasa; Kim, Y.-H. (1999). *Chwaong Yun Ch'i-ho Sŏnsaeng yakchŏn* [The biography of Yun Ch'i-ho]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Chwaong Yun Ch'i-ho Munhwa Saŏphoe; De Ceuster, K. (1994). *From modernization to collaboration: the dilemma of Korean cultural nationalism: the case of Yun Ch'i-ho (1865-1945)*. Leuven, [s.n.].

³⁰⁰ Yun, C.-H. (1893). *Diary*. April 8 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_026_0010_0040_0050: accessed 2016 June 25)

³⁰¹ Yun, C.-H. (1892). *Diary*. September 16 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0030_0090_0090: accessed 2016 June 25)

³⁰² Yun, C.-H. (1892). *Diary*. April 18 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0030_0040_0090: accessed 2016 June 25)

‘Redemption’ began to challenge the Northern hegemony.³⁰³ The so-called Southern Redeemers, emboldened by the overthrow of the reconstruction government, swung the pendulum for any aspiration of racial improvements to the other way. By the late 1880s even the most radical Republican congressmen thought the effort to improve the social condition of the southern blacks a lost cause.³⁰⁴ Beneath this cynicism lied a conventional southern view that the failure of freed blacks after the Civil War to improve their lots was in a way reflection of the fixity of the race which, ‘unless mixed’ cannot be advanced.³⁰⁵ In the 1880s the measures to ensure legal parity between blacks and whites implemented by the Radical Republicans in the defeated South was being systematically dismantled by the resurgent Democrats, with several states completely disenfranchising blacks under the new segregation regime of ‘separate but equal’ policy.³⁰⁶ The Southern ideologues explicitly embraced the imperative of social stratification as an unchangeable human fact and the inequality between races upheld.³⁰⁷

Capitalising on the Northern conciliarism, the Southerners began to downplay the centrality of slavery in the Civil War in favour of the struggle for *self-emancipation* of the whites, thereby justifying the postbellum racial status-quo as an irrelevant outcome: hence the myth of the ‘Lost Cause.’³⁰⁸ By this new interpretative schema the intended beneficiary of the emancipation was the Southern whites themselves. A lecturer at Vanderbilt in 1890 reiterated that the issue of slavery was firmly secondary to the secession crisis, and the true import of Civil War, a view to which Yun

³⁰³ Lemann, N. (2006). *Redemption: the last battle of the Civil War*. New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux. For an overview see Foner, E. (1990). *A short history of Reconstruction, 1863-1877*. New York, Harper & Row, pp. 82-216

³⁰⁴ Franklin, J. H. (1994). *Reconstruction after the Civil War*. Chicago, The University of Chicago press, pp.211-214; Lemann, N. (2006). *Redemption: the last battle of the Civil War*. New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux

³⁰⁵ Yun, C.-H. (1891). *Diary*. January 16 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0020_0010_0160: accessed 2016 June 25)

³⁰⁶ Calhoun, C. W. (2006). *Conceiving a new republic: the Republican Party and the southern question, 1869-1900*. Lawrence, Kan, University Press of Kansas, pp.284-287

³⁰⁷ Sigler, J. A. (1969). *The conservative tradition in American thought; an anthology*. New York, Putnam

³⁰⁸ Foster, G. M. (1987). *Ghosts of the confederacy: defeat, the lost cause, and the emergence of the new South, 1865 to 1913*. New York, Oxford University Press; Blight, D. W. (2002). *Race and reunion: the Civil War in American memory*. Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press; Wilson, C. R. (2009). *Baptized in blood: the religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*. Athens, Ga, University of Georgia Press; Osterweis, R. G. (1973). *The myth of the lost cause, 1865-1900*. Hamden, Conn., Archon Books

acceded, was in rescuing the 'slave owners from the domination of indolence, indulgence, and love of tyranny – the vices attendant vices to the institution of slavery.'³⁰⁹ And it was to the ideological reinforcement of the Lost Cause the Southern Protestant clergymen played the vital role. The bishop Atticus Haywood, a predecessor to Warren Candler at Emory, proclaimed that whites should 'consider their special obligations to be grateful to God' for removing the institution of slavery because it is 'better for our social and ethical development [...]'³¹⁰

Indeed the very figure in this religious struggle was Southern Methodist bishop Warren Akin Candler, the life-long mentor of Yun Ch'i-ho at Emory University renowned for his robust opposition to Darwinism, Holiness movement, and ecclesiastical reunion with the north.³¹¹ Yun's dotted references to racial attitudes and evolution, of which so much is made, ought to be contextualised in relation to the contemporary social, political and theological reality of the American South then hostile to any progressive or evolutionary theories. As W. J. Cash notes 'Darwin, Huxley, Ben Butler, Sherman and Satan came to figure in Southern feeling very nearly as a single person.'³¹² For many antebellum religionists in the American South the institution of slavery represented the stratification of social order fully sanctioned by the Scripture, not an institution of racial discrimination.³¹³ Whilst the outcome of the Civil War was decisive, the most dramatic intellectual transformation was the violent focus on the issue of race divorced from the Scripture.³¹⁴

³⁰⁹ Yun, C.-H. (1890). *Diary*. January 11 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0010_0010_0110: accessed 2016 June 25)

³¹⁰ Osterweis, R. G. (1973). *The myth of the lost cause, 1865-1900*. Hamden, Conn., Archon Books, p.122. The quote originally from Haygood, A. G. (1950) *The New South: Thanksgiving Sermon, 1880*. Emory University Publications – Sources and Reprints, Series VI, no.3. In Judson C. War. Atlanta, Georgia, The Emory University Library, p.9

³¹¹ Bauman, M. K. (1981). *Warren Akin Candler, the conservative as idealist*. Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow Press; Yun named his second son after Candler, see his letter to Mrs Loehr, 1918 May 1, (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_035_0030_0010_0650: accessed 2016 June 25)

³¹² Quoted in Osterweis, R. G. (1973). *The myth of the lost cause, 1865-1900*. Hamden, Conn., Archon Books, p.119

³¹³ Carrigan, W. D. (2000). In defense of the social order: Racial thought among southern white Presbyterians in the nineteenth century. *American Nineteenth Century History*, v.1, n.2, p.31; more generally see Daly, J. P. (2002). *When slavery was called freedom: evangelicalism, proslavery, and the causes of the Civil War*. Lexington, University Press of Kentucky

³¹⁴ See Carrigan, W. D. (2000). In defense of the social order: Racial thought among southern white Presbyterians in the nineteenth century. *American Nineteenth Century History*, v.1, n.2, p.46; Dresser, Z. W.

The Southern Baptist and Methodist ministers in the post-Civil War years held tenaciously onto the belief that the freed blacks represented a dependent class, deserving of paternalistic kindness but destined by God to do the same kind of labour in the South which they had performed as slaves.³¹⁵

Ingrained in the sectional culture that sanctified subordination of one segment of humanity to another as natural – if not rational – Yun maintained the condition of dependence was not only admissible but at times necessary for the improvement of the lot, a sentiment consistent with the Southern political ideology of the period.

In this social milieu there emerged two lines of thought concerning the freedmen: the economic gradualism on the one hand and the cultural shift away from the Civil War itself. The Republican platform which previously championed the political emancipation of blacks gave way to the *economic* rationalisation, namely industrial virtues of self-help and hard work, in line with the rapid economic recovery and industrialisation in the South, with the leading black educators such as Booker T. Washington proclaiming the need to turn their energy on ‘agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions.’³¹⁶ Education meant not the imparting and disseminating the enlightenment ideas and democratic values but technical know-hows to help integrate freed blacks into the emerging industrialising economic order, an outlook that had profound impact on Yun’s own idea of education in Korea. Indeed when he comes to start his Anglo-Korean School in Songdo off Incheon in 1907 with the funding from the Bishop Candler, it is to the writings by Booker T. Washington that Yun turns for inspiration.³¹⁷ For the people in the South education meant the pragmatic means by which to discipline the freedmen into a circuit of

(2013). *Providence Revised: The Southern Presbyterian Old School in the Civil War and Reconstruction*. In (eds) Wright, B., & Dresser, Z. W. *Apocalypse and the millennium in the American Civil War era*, Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press

³¹⁵ Farish, H. D. (1938). *The Circuit Rider dismounts: a social history of southern Methodism 1865-1900*. Richmond, Va, Dietz. pp.209-233, pp.294-324; Spain, R. B. (1967). *At ease in Zion; social history of Southern Baptists, 1865-1900*. Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press, pp.68-96

³¹⁶ Calhoun, C. W. (2006). *Conceiving a new republic: the Republican Party and the southern question, 1869-1900*. Lawrence, Kan, University Press of Kansas, p.276; Franklin, J. H. (1994). *Reconstruction after the Civil War*. Chicago, The University of Chicago press, p.213; Woodward, C. V. (1951). *Origins of the new South, 1877-1913*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, p.365

³¹⁷ Yun, C.-H. (1907). *Diary*. July 28 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_035_0030_0010_0600: accessed 2016 June 25)

production, not of raising a class of democratic citizenry. In the wake of Southern Redemption that witnessed the rehabilitation of ex-Confederate veterans and the high-tide of violent white supremacy, Yun's equivocation on racial and social condition of America was a full ideological vision backed up by the contemporary social, religious, and political reality.

Yun valued the opinion of his professor at Emory who admitted 'the impracticality of granting social equality to the Negro but insisted on helping his educational and religious advantages'.³¹⁸ This was indeed an enlightened attitude where the prevailing sentiment was 'to keep the negro in ignorance'.³¹⁹ For instance, even the friend Yun considers most sincere of all confided that 'the whites wish to keep the dark people in ignorance so that the latter may not aspire to social equality'.³²⁰ Yun's knowing bewilderment that 'one should fear the domination of 8,000,000 negroes over 60 million whites – and the white has all the wealth, power, intelligence and education at that' is telling.³²¹

The ongoing failures to morally reform the freedmen by the whites, to ameliorate the entrenched racial hatred, and to perfect morally dubious fellow Christians deeply exercised Yun's religious thought throughout his stay in the United States and thereafter. At the same time the 'perfect inconsistency between their acts full of the basest prejudice and their doctrine full of the loftiest' that Yun discovered shortly after his arrival in 1888 was increasingly resolved by the theology of sanctification of the hierarchy and the incumbent social structure.³²² From natural inequity amongst men is inferred a structure of moral reciprocity and obligations which compel a *natural* social

³¹⁸ Yun, C.-H. (1891). *Diary*. March 27 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0020_0030_0270; accessed 2016 June 25)

³¹⁹ Yun, C.-H. (1891). *Diary*. March 14 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0020_0030_0140; accessed 2016 June 25)

³²⁰ Yun, C.-H. (1889). *Diary*. December 17 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_024_0070_0130_0180; accessed 2016 June 25)

³²¹ Yun, C.-H. (1892). *Diary*. April 18 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0030_0040_0090; accessed 2016 June 25)

³²² Yun, C.-H. (1890). *Diary*. February 14 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0010_0020_0140; accessed 2016 June 25)

hierarchy, according to Warren Candler.³²³ Yun calmly rationalised that ‘the follies and crimes committed by the strong against the weak in training the latter for self government... a necessary evil’, a work of ‘Providence’ beyond human understanding.³²⁴ In such a socio-cultural milieu believing that ‘the dark slavery was after all, the best thing that could be done’ was by and large inevitable.³²⁵ But squaring the circle of his conviction that man is ‘universally evil’ complicated his unavoidable entanglement with *real politics*.³²⁶ For if humanity were incorrigibly corrupt, politics itself became suspect. The entire sphere of politics was corrupt because ‘no one can serve two masters’, i.e., God and politics.³²⁷ To those who insist on religion to intervene in politics Yun reserved the meanest disdain: the Jesuitical doctrine of ‘the ends-justify-means’.³²⁸

Thus when asked to return to Chosŏn, Yun harboured ‘no ambition for entering into the troubled politics of Korea [sic]’ and always tried to ‘turn back to politics, so called.’³²⁹ Yun’s rather jaundice views of female political participation become somewhat intelligible in this grid of contemporary sensibility. Throughout his life Yun never tired of condemning the prevalence of subordinate position of Korean women whose masters are many – ‘her husband, her father, and mother-in-law, her children’, whilst at the time fully committed to the opposition of female enfranchisement.³³⁰ Calling the female suffrage movement ‘an evil’, Yun remained convinced that the enlargement of suffrage

³²³ Bauman, M. K. (1981). *Warren Akin Candler, the conservative as idealist*. Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow Press, p.143

³²⁴ Yun, C.-H. (1891). *Diary*. May 12 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0020_0050_0120: accessed 2016 June 25)

³²⁵ Yun, C.-H. (1889). *Diary*. November 24 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_024_0070_0130_0330: accessed 2016 June 25)

³²⁶ Yun, C.-H. (1934). *Diary*. July 11 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0010_0060_0250: accessed 2016 June 25)

³²⁷ Yun, C.-H. (1890). *Diary*. December 7 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0010_0120_0070: accessed 2016 June 25); see also Yun, C.-H. (1890). *Diary*. December 13 ‘The interest of the Kingdom of Christ cannot, and must not, be identified with the interest of a party.’ (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0010_0120_0130: accessed 2016 June 25)

³²⁸ Yun, C.-H. (1894). January 1 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_026_0020_0010_0010: accessed 2016 June 25)

³²⁹ Yun, C.-H. (1894). *Diary*. December 27 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_026_0020_0120_0120: accessed 2016 June 25); Yun, C.-H. (1897). *Diary*. February 8 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0001_0020_0050: accessed 2016 June 25)

³³⁰ Yun, C.-H. (1894). *Diary*. March 11 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_026_0020_0030_0040: accessed 2016 June 25); Yun, C.-H. (1897). *Diary*. February 18 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0001_0020_0110: accessed 2016 June 25)

would not deliver ‘a pure public sentiment’ but only invites more ‘fooling... with politics.’³³¹ The public debate on the education of women in February of 1898 in which Yun squared off against Jaisohn’s assertion of ‘creaturely equality by God’ between sexes is instructive. Yun argued that equality would mean that what little scarce resource there is for educating men would have to be fretted away, thereby impoverishing everyone.³³² This was far from something unique to Yun. Many southern women, particularly those active in the temperance movement considered it ‘injurious to temperance cause’ and rejected it as such.³³³ His declaration that ‘woman’s suffrage means everybody’s suffering’ and politics, ‘none of her business’ was not because Yun thought women were incapable of politics – his intimate knowledge of Queen Min in Chosŏn court eminently qualified him.³³⁴ It was more that Yun’s view of politics as a corrupting domain of immoral calculations that he believed that women ought to be spared from being involved in politics.

Anti-politics and the sociology of sin

Dr. Callaway preached on human free agency.

I slept most part of the sermon.³³⁵

Brooding scepticism and acerbic cynicism so pronounced in Yun’s personal writings thus betray his vision of politics and religion forged in the Southern caldron where social stratification and racial segregationist policy were entrenched. The seething resentment against the hypocrisies of the white

³³¹ Yun, C.-H. (1893). *Diary*. May 20 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_026_0010_0050_0130: accessed 2016 June 25)

³³² *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsŏl [editorial], January 4

³³³ Yun, C.-H. (1893). *Diary*. April 30 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_026_0010_0040_0170: accessed 2016 June 25)

³³⁴ Yun, C.-H. (1892). *Diary*. January 6 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0030_0010_0040: accessed 2016 June 25)

³³⁵ Yun, C.-H. (1893). *Diary*. April 16 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_026_0010_0040_0090: accessed 2016 June 25)

Christians was matched by his own 'rage and surging bitterness' within his heart and scepticism towards 'full value of the forgiveness of sins and of eternal life through Christ,' which created a moral dynamic of gothic proportion in Yun.³³⁶

If Jaisohn represented in a rough comparative spectrum the sunny progressive side of the late nineteenth century Christian abolitionist political thinking shaped by 'the horrors of African slavery in the United States', Yun could be characterised as a darker *gothic* outlook essentially sceptical of 'human heart being naturally good'.³³⁷ Given this orientation labelling Yun as a straightforward enlightenment figure with a Darwinian vent – social or otherwise – along with the merry band of reformers seems no more justifiable than calling him a straightforward 'opportunistic collaborator'.³³⁸

Closely echoing the lingering Southern apologist pattern of thought Yun believed that there is no human remedy to undo what God determined. The state of corruption amounted to a permanent anthropological stasis. The failure to achieve significant advance on the lives of blacks from poverty, inequality, and social ignorance led him to take issue with the general outline of perfectability of humanity. It is in this context that Yun's preoccupation with the servitude and hierarchy as an inevitable human condition resulting from sinfulness and corruption and made theologically tolerable. Resigned to this theological pessimism, those under the shades of paganism and idolatry

³³⁶ Yun, C.-H. (1897). *Diary*. May 12 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_027_0030_0050_0080: accessed 2016 June 25)

³³⁷ Editorial Department. (1897). The Independence Club. *The Korean Repository*, v.4, n.11, p.438; Yun, C.-H. (1892). *Diary*. November 20 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0030_0110_0150: accessed 2016 June 25)

³³⁸ See Lee, T. S. (2000). A Political Factor in the Rise of Protestantism in Korea: Protestantism and the 1919 March First Movement. *Church History*, v.69, p.127; Yang, H.-H. (2009). *Yun Ch'i-ho wa Kim Kyo-sin: kŭndae Chosŏn ūi minjokjŏk aident'it'i wa kidokkyo* [Yun Ch'i-ho and Kim Kyo-sin: a national Christian identity in modern Chosŏn]. P'aju-si, Hanul Ak'ademi. p.55; Urban, A. (2014). Yun Ch'i-ho's Alienation by Way of Inclusion: A Korean International Student and Christian Reform in the "New" South, 1888–1893. *Journal of Asian American Studies*, v.17, pp.305–336; Chŏn, T.-P. (1977). *T'obagi sinang sanmaek: Han'guk kyohoe sado haengjŏn* [The indigenous theological mountain range: Korean church's Acts of theApostle]. Sŏul, Taehan Kidokkyo Ch'ulp'ansa, p.236; Pak, C.-H. (2010). *Yun Ch'i-ho ūi hyŏmnyŏk ilgi: ŏnŭ ch'inil chisigin ūi tokpaek* [Yun Ch'i-ho's diary of collaboration: the monologue of a pro-Japanese intellectual]. Sŏul-si, Isup; Pak, N.-J. (2005). *Usŏng yŏlp'ae ūi sinhwa* [The myth of the survival of the fittest]. Sŏul-si, Han'gyŏresa, Chapter 3; Chon, P.-H. (1995). 19 sekimal chinbojŏk chisikin ūi injongjuŭijŏk t'ŭksŏng: tongip sinmun kwa yunch'iho ilki rŭl chungsim ūro [The characteristics of a progressive intellectual from the late nineteenth century: with the focus on Tongnip Sinmun and the diary of Yun Ch'i-ho]. *Han'guk chŏngch'i hakhoebo = Korean Political Science Review*, v.29, pp.125–145

obviously bore the additional layer of ignorance. This is not to suggest that Yun in any way supported the formal institution of slavery. Yun's empirical observation of 'slave-like' condition persisting in the American South (or in the form of wage-slavery in the North) simply indicated the empirical fact of 'unredeemed' mankind, consistent with the New South ideology. If slavery for Jaisohn was an intolerable *political* condition contrary to the divine mandate and the unlawful disorder to which no man could jurally consent (or on behalf of anyone else), for Yun it was a natural if disagreeable state of affairs.³³⁹

Yun endorsed the point Yi Wan Yong raised at the Independence Club debate on slavery that only by the slave owners voluntarily 'determining in their own hearts to surrender their masterships' could the institution of slavery, which was thought 'only a form of service' be completely and permanently abolished.³⁴⁰ Whilst Yun initially notes his father's disapproval of 'the abolition of slavery and of caste distinction before other social ties have been devised to hold different classes in order', Yun doubted the prospect of orderly transition in Chosŏn where 'many a slave owners suffered intolerable indignities at the hands of the freedmen. In some cases the newly freed slaves would insult and beat their former masters compelling them to carry sedan chairs for their daughters or wives.'³⁴¹

The tenacity of his scepticism on human progressive potential owed itself to the theology of human incorrigibility, or the 'guilt of inherited depravity' occasioned by the Fall. The Sin was the central determinant circumscribing Yun's view of society and politics. On a personal level this could only come about through personal acceptance of Jesus as saviour. In this regard Yun was an heir of the Southern intellectual tradition of snubbing a political settlement in that he considered the science of

³³⁹ I am thankful for Professor John Dunn's clarification on this point.

³⁴⁰ Editorial Department. (1897). Funeral of her majesty, the late queen. *The Korean Repository*, v.4, n.11, pp.433-434

³⁴¹ Yun, C.-H. (1895). *Diary*. February 27 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_027_0010_0020_0110: accessed 2016 June 25); Yun, C.-H. (1895). *Diary*. March 11 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_027_0010_0030_0060: accessed 2016 June 25)

politics beneath theology and sociology.³⁴² Politics was for Yun a field of pure ideology, that is to say a domain of deception, law, and psychology unmoored from theologico-moral fundamentals. Insofar as its end concerns the state of *artificiality*, politics was one removed from the nature, therefore inferior to the study of society. Yun conceived the task of regeneration of humanity an exclusive reserve of religion. Given this dynamic, whatever the transformation in politics it is nonetheless external to the fundamental anthropological condition of residual sin afflicting every community of men. Religion was therefore not a 'an instrument of politics' and even less a carefully insulated matter of private conscience but a superior form of knowledge whose epistemic condition permitted depth and width inaccessible to nonbelievers.³⁴³

'We do not often know what God's will is', confided Yun, and as such '[we] do not seek to do His will.'³⁴⁴ The 'inability to assert mastery' over the fallen nature, capitially dramatized in the tale of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde that so engrossed Yun ironically underscored the need for *paternalistic* but inscrutable God, not political activism.³⁴⁵ For the society at large, the condition of sin could only be done away by the second coming of Christ, not by political revolutionaries or religious men and women who let their 'zeal degenerate into fanaticism'.³⁴⁶ It constituted the permanent anthropological state irreversible by any human endeavours. Given this orientation any suggestions of quick and easy remedy therefore were at odds with Yun's theological understanding of this world.

The most divisive of theological issues of the day in the Southern Methodist Church to which Yun belonged, the Holiness movement, a doctrine of second sanctification by which the Holy Spirit regenerates a person to an 'exalted condition of... sinlessness,' achieving inward perfection

³⁴² Garber, P. L. (1943). *James Henley Thornwell, Presbyterian defender of the old South*. Richmond, p.14

³⁴³ Yun, C.-H. (1893). *Diary*. October 31 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_026_0010_0100_0090: accessed 2016 June 25)

³⁴⁴ Yun, C.-H. (1890). *Diary*. January 11 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0010_0010_0110: accessed 2016 June 25)

³⁴⁵ Yun, C.-H. (1901). *Diary*. January 22 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0040_0010_0030: accessed 2016 June 25)

³⁴⁶ Yun, C.-H. (1896). *Diary*. November 11 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_027_0020_0110_0100: accessed 2016 June 25); see also 'enthusiasm as excitement or fanaticism' in Yun, C.-H. (1891). *Diary*. March 20 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0020_0030_0200: accessed 2016 June 25)

meritorious in God's eye, is instructive in this regard.³⁴⁷ The Holiness movement was a resurgence of the mid-nineteenth century revival of evangelical perfectionism through rigorous moral and religious discipline spearheaded by the northern abolitionist divines like Charles G. Finney.³⁴⁸ But this perfectionist theology faced stiff resistance amongst the southern divines: '[the] South's preoccupation was with guilt, not with innocence, with the reality of evil, not with the dream of perfection.'³⁴⁹ In particular, against the possibility of moral perfectability and spiritual redemption stood the theologians like Bishop Atticus Haygood and Bishop Warren Akin Candler.³⁵⁰ Likening them to modern 'Savonarolas,' Atticus condemned the 'holiness cranks' as heretical. Candler was equally ruthless in uprooting them under his ecclesiastical control.³⁵¹

With the disavowal of human progressive potential and disparaging of politics, Yun's assertion that the worst excesses of politico-religious pretension were reserved in the Catholic sacerdotal system obtains intelligibility. The Anglo-American Protestants commonly held that Roman Catholicism, much as Confucianism did, deified the political authority, thereby giving rise to the idolatry of man which breeds despotism.³⁵² Yun thought Roman Catholicism mummifies the spirituality innate in all men into a form of political servitude and the sincere belief into empty 'mummery of ritualism' which vacates everything 'edifying or instructive' from Christianity.³⁵³ At times Yun would go so far as to brand Roman Catholicism 'a heathenism' which was of interest to him mainly because it gave

³⁴⁷ Matthews, S., & Smith, G. B. (eds) (1973). *Sanctification. A Dictionary of religion and ethics*. Detroit, Gale Research, p.397; Perfectionism, p.331. For the crisis, see Hill, S. S. (1967). *Southern Churches in crisis*. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston

³⁴⁸ Thompson, E. T. (1961). *The spirituality of the church; a distinctive doctrine of the Presbyterian Church in the United States*. Richmond, John Knox Press

³⁴⁹ Woodward, C. V. (1968). *The burden of Southern history*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, p.2

³⁵⁰ See Pierce, A. M. (1948). *Giant against the sky; the life of Bishop Warren Akin Candler*. New York, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press; Bauman, M. K. (1981). *Warren Akin Candler, the conservative as idealist*. Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow Press. For Bishop Haygood's stance against Holiness movement, see Haygood, A. G. (1895). *The monk and the prince*. Atlanta, Ga, Foote & Davies

³⁵¹ Turley, B. (1991). A Wheel Within a Wheel: Southern Methodism and the Georgia Holiness Association. *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, v.75, n.2, p.314; Bauman, M. K. (1981). *Warren Akin Candler, the conservative as idealist*. Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow Press, p. 48; Jones, C. E. (1974). *Perfectionist persuasion: the Holiness movement and American Methodism, 1867-1936*. Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow Press

³⁵² See Chapter 3, *passim*

³⁵³ Yun, C.-H. (1896). *Diary*. August 31 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_027_0020_0080_0250: accessed 2016 June 25); Yun, C.-H. (1889). *Diary*. December 1 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_024_0070_0130_0310: accessed 2016 June 25)

him 'some idea of the way in which the Greeks and Romans worshipped their gods.'³⁵⁴ Therefore whilst 'Tong-haks, Catholics and Schismites' gradually blended into an instance of recurring religious sociological patterns in Yun's mind, the worst of all was Roman Catholicism which, by combining the despotism of Confucianism with the practice of popish idolatry, amounted to a total spiritual servitude.³⁵⁵ As Yun saw it, it was not just the Roman Catholic's 'close resemblance to the rites of a Buddhist temple' or other pagan religions that distressed him.³⁵⁶ It was rather than Roman Catholicism was a form of politics with the duplicitous religious mask on. It was indeed Edward Gibbon, whose work on early church history convinced Yun that 'the contest between the Catholics and the heretic was no less political than theological.'³⁵⁷ One could only wonder the reason for the reversal Yun's view on Roman Catholicism thirty years later, this time praising its rituals once so revolting to him as '[giving] an atmosphere conducive to religious emotions. The Protestant Churches are too secular in appearance and in atmosphere.'³⁵⁸

Chapter summary

In Berlin I saw the photograph of a beautiful little hand taken in all its shapeliness, softness and sweetness. By its side there was the picture of its bony structure taken by means of X-rays. The contrast between the two made me realize the well known truth that beauty is but skin deep. How amiable I can be and even how good I may sometimes be; but to the all seeing eyes of God, nay,

³⁵⁴ Yun, C.-H. (1889). *Diary*. December 7 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_024_0070_0130_0370: accessed 2016 June 25); also his letter to Dr Allen, 1889 December 28 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_035_0030_0010_0170: accessed 2016 June 25)

³⁵⁵ Yun, C.-H. (1898). *Diary*. March, 18 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0010_0030_0090: accessed 2016 June 25)

³⁵⁶ Yun, C.-H. (1894). *Diary*. May 5 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_026_0020_0050_0020: accessed 2016 June 25)

³⁵⁷ Yun, C.-H. (1890). *Diary*. July 25 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_025_0010_0070_0250: accessed 2016 June 25)

³⁵⁸ Yun, C.-H. (1934). *Diary*. July 26 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_033_0030_0070_0260: accessed 2016 June 25)

even to the eyes of my conscience, my heart is wicked. Decent, moral,
"consistent" (so-called) life may give me the peace of conscience but the peace
of God which passes all understanding — never.³⁵⁹

Surveying the two distinct streams of Christian ideas that flowed into the Korean intellectual landscape in the 1890s, references to God and theology have hardly been subject to scholarly scrutiny. Bound within the 'modern-secular-national' framework, many scholars continue to perceive Jaisohn's emphasis on private property and Yun's theological pessimism as a precursor of capitalistic ideology, social Darwinism, and political opportunism. Wedded to this narrative are vague and anachronistic appeals to the separation of church and state, spontaneous patriotism and nationalism, or the profit-motive of the Anglo-American Protestants in Chosŏn. Without the effort to grasp the historical specificity of American Protestantism informed by the sectional history, ideology, and religiosity, the interpretative efforts on Philip Jaisohn and Yun Ch'i-ho would be invariably reduced to either moralistic judgments, or signs of modernity.

In this chapter, by bringing in sharp focus the theological resource underlying Jaisohn and Yun, I drew attention to the socio-cultural norms, prejudices and values of the respective sectionalised society in which they were educated and instructed. In the case of Jaisohn it was the post-Civil War abolitionist ideology of private property and labour, whilst for Yun it was the sociology of human incorrigibility and distrust of politics characteristic of the post-Reconstruction South. On this intellectual context, the highly variable manner in which these ideas were deployed, contingent on the individual intention, political and social context in which they operated, and the desired ends are analysed. Jaisohn fused his ideology of private property and loyalty in such a way as to disintegrate the received notion of political legitimacy, more consequentially, the incumbent authority. By

³⁵⁹ Yun, C.-H. (1897). *Diary*. May 10 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_027_0030_0050_0070; accessed 2016 June 25)

conceptually pairing the denial of private property with slavery, and later, disloyalty, Jaisohn fundamentally compromised the traditional legitimist conception of political authority to those segment of population most vulnerable to the ongoing societal instability. In place of traditional loyalty, Jaisohn offered the vision of liberty based on the Christian theory of private property. Most crucially, his message unambiguously sought to cast private property as a determinate source of liberty and, crucially, added the voluntaristic dimension of patriotism.

That the most radical aspects of his theory of private property and labour were coherent only in reference to the Christian framework has been noted and, as the subsequent chapters argue, the subsequent debates concerning human sociability and liberty took place in this religious and theological context.³⁶⁰ Armed with this theological resource Jaisohn brusquely disregarded the histories of Korean and Chinese antiquity except that which allows him to disparage the incumbent government. Jaisohn's writings and speeches reveal the crisp outline of his ideational commitment to popularising the idea of ahistorical foundation of political legitimacy, a powerful solvent against the legitimist notion of authority.

Where Jaisohn identified liberty as the transformative potential vector of politics via institutionalisation of private property, Yun categorically disqualified the voluntaristic approaches to politics, a distinctive Southern attitude issuing from the post-Civil War theological perspective. The wickedness in man, persistent in spite of best political efforts, economic improvement or even religious enthusiasm, was something to which only continual Protestant religiosity could provide remedial hope. The entrenched social ills could only be addressed by the salvific conversion brought upon by the Grace. The ineradicable corruption in man, borne out by ignorance, doubts, unbelief, and fear, necessitated paternalistic social discipline and individualistic pietism, not revolutionary politics that would sweep human shortcomings once and for all. Yun's pietistic faith was unmoved by

³⁶⁰ For the recent discussions on sociability and commerce, see Hont, I., Kapossy, B., & Sonenscher, M. (2015). *Politics in commercial society: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith*. Cambridge, Harvard University press, Chapter 1; Hont, I. (2010). *Jealousy of trade: international competition and the nation state in historical perspective*. Cambridge, Mass, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

any political vicissitude throughout his life. He confessed that only the fire of 'living faith in God alone can regenerate a fallen man'.³⁶¹ From 1905 the 'conservative' theological vision of Yun gradually drained into the ecclesiastical body where it congealed into the body of political theology in Korea.

The radical liberal principles unleashed by Jaisohn were inherited and expanded by Rhee Syngman across the Pacific in the following decade. Poised between the elevation and repudiation of politics following the expulsion of Jaisohn in 1898, there emerged a new avenue for political engagement that was no longer inward looking or domestically oriented. Instead this new vision turned to the sea as the focal point of political virtue. How the Christian political thought discovered the global order of maritime commercial regime will be addressed in the next chapter.

³⁶¹ Yun, C.-H. (1897). *Diary*. May 8 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_027_0030_0050_0050: accessed 2016 June 25)

Chapter 5: trade and international law in Rhee's political thought

It is the will of God for Korea to be free...

Let them all criticize me. But as long as God does not condemn me,

that is all I ask³⁶²

No one else in modern Korean history embodies more ideological contradiction and political betrayal than Rhee Syngman (Kr: 이승만; c: 李承晩; b.1875-1965). Born into a penurious household with vague pretensions to royal lineage, a period of violent decline in Chosŏn dynasty [1382-1897] and its short-lived successor, the Great Empire of Han [1897-1910], led to his father being an impoverished Confucian gentleman learned in the canonical classics and geomancy without an office. His mother, a devout Buddhist, supported the family while her husband squandered most of his time and meagre family fortune away in search of propitious burial sites for his ancestors.³⁶³ The first doctorate degree holder in Korean history, Rhee headed the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea in Shanghai until impeachment in 1925 only to become the president of the Republic of Korea from 1948 to 1960 again. His administration was marred by authoritarianism and extreme anti-communism to the dismay of his international allies and domestic supporters.³⁶⁴

The source of his egregious political misconducts has long perplexed historians; this stands in stark contrast to the banner of liberalism and democracy he himself energetically championed throughout his career. History mainly remembers the legacy of his deeply troubling political conduct and Machiavellian opportunism, described by one historian as unscrupulously combining 'fascism with

³⁶² Korea (South), & Karl, H. (1955). *President Syngman Rhee's journey to America*. Seoul, Office of Public Information, Republic of Korea, p.55

³⁶³ Lew, The Making of the First Korean President, (2014), pp.3-4

³⁶⁴ Cha, V. (2016). *Powerplay: the origins of the American alliance system in Asia*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, pp.58-60

traditional Confucian conservatism' in a manner typical of postcolonial authoritarian leadership.³⁶⁵

His 12-year rule, besmirched by US clientelism, the civil war, rampant corruption and extra-constitutional measures, is no less compromised by Rhee's stated goal to Christianise Korea. The efforts to reconcile his secular political programmes with the explicit call for 'Christianisation of Korea', symbolised by his 'prayer' at the first constitutional assembly of the Republic in 1948 and his oath of office with his hand on the Bible, have been a longstanding subject of controversy, incurring strong hostility and embarrassment from religionists and non-religionists alike.³⁶⁶

The current interpretations are at loggerheads as to how best to reconcile his commitments to internationalism, national independence, and Protestant Christianity in the 1900s. The fact that much of his political efforts were devoted to his building the nation in the mould of Protestant religiosity has been cited not infrequently as emblematic, if not the cause of the political crises and illiberal rule. Unsurprisingly historians' verdicts on Rhee continue to be diametrically opposed; some find a manipulative and ruthless opportunist and others a zealous yet naïve revolutionary.³⁶⁷ The

³⁶⁵ Most recently see Sö, C.-S. (2005). *Yi Süng-man ŭi chöngch'i ideollogi* [Rhee Syngman's political ideology]. Söul-si, Yöksa Pip'yöngsa. 164-208; Kimura, K., & Kim, S.-D. (2013). *Han'guk ŭi kwönwijuŭijöck ch'eje söngnip: Yi Süng-man chöngkwön ŭi punggoe kkaji*. [The establishment of Korean conservative ideology: up to the collapse of the Rhee Syngman regime] Söul-si, Chei aen Ssi

³⁶⁶ See Son, S.-I. (2013). Han'guk minchokchuŭi ŭi tu yuhyöng – Yisüngman kwa Kimku. [Two types of Korean nationalism – Rhee Syngman and Kim Ku]. *Wölgan Chosun*.

(<http://monthly.chosun.com/client/news/print.asp?ctcd=I&nNewsNumb=201307100060>: accessed August 3 2015), n.52; Pak, C.-S. (2007). The Protestant Church as a Political Training Ground in Modern Korea, *International Journal of Korean History*, v.11, n.12; Yi, Y.-Y. (1984). *Paeksa Yi Yun-yöng hoegorok: Kungmu ch'ongni söri* [Recollections of Dr Yi Yun-yöng]. Söul, Sach'o, pp.267-68 (quoted from *Kidok sinmun*. (1948). Chehonkukoe kaehoe kidomun [Prayer offered at the opening of the First National Assembly], August 15)

³⁶⁷ The leading advocates of Rhee's reassessment are Yu Yöng-Ik and Lee Chöng-Sik. For the burgeoning cottage industry see Lee, C.-S., Kwön, K.-B., & Lee, C.-S. (2002). *Ch'odae Taet'ongnyöng Yi Süng-man ŭi ch'öngnyön sijöl* [The first president Yi Süng-man as a young man]. Söul-si, Tonga Ilbosa; Yi, C.-S. (2005). *Yi Süng-man ŭi kuhanmal kaehyöck undong: küpchinjuŭi esö kidokkyo ipkungnon ŭro* [Yi Süng-man's enlightenment activism in the late Chosön period: from political radicalism to Christian national foundation]. Taejön Kwangyöksi, Paejae Tahakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Yu, Y. (2014). *The making of the first Korean president: Syngman Rhee's quest for independence, 1875-1948*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press; Yu, Y. (2002). *Chölmün nal ŭi Yi Süng-man: Hansöng kamok saenghwal, 1899-1904 kwa Okchung chapki yön'gu* [Yi Süng-man as a young man: a study on his Hansöng imprisonment period, 1899-1904 and his miscellaneous writing]. Söul T'ükpyölsi, Yönsa Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Yu, Y. (2000). *Yi Süng-man yön'gu: Tongnip undong kwa Taehan Min'guk kón'guk* [A study of Yi Süng-man: independence activism and the foundation of the Republic of Korea]. Söul T'ükpyölsi, Yönsa Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Chöng, P. (2005). *Unam Yi Süng-man yön'gu*. [A study of Unam Yi Süng-man]. Söul-si, Yöksa Pip'yöngsa; An, P. (2011). *Sajin kwa hamkke ingnün taet'ongnyöng Yi Süng-man* [President Yi Süng-man through the photographs]. Söul-si, Kip'arang; Ch'oe, C. (2012). *Yi Süng-man kwa Menon kürido Mo Yun-suk: Taehan Min'guk kón'guk kwa Han'guk yösöng* [Yi Süng-man and Menon, and Mo Yun-suk:

more recent endeavours to rehabilitate Rhee's legacy – a *Rhee-naissance* if I may be so bold – challenge what they perceive as excessive and politically-motivated charges unbecoming for a national founder on par with George Washington, Kemal Atatürk, or even Emperor Constantine.³⁶⁸

Such a lavish praise may strike readers as extravagant, but his singular importance as a political leader who presided over the Korean Provisional Government in the 1920s and again after the independence in 1945 until 1960, for good or ill, cannot be overstated.

Rarely has this interpretive rift led to probing questions as to the divergent streams of post-Chosŏn political ideologies of which Rhee was a part; more commonly it has served to fuel adversarial views on modern Korean historiography through his personality. Consequently very little scholarship has addressed how his religious ideas were related to political thought other than as a blanket ideological apology for American hegemony or western imperialism. Much of the difficulty in evaluating Rhee's position within the existing historiography lies in the entrenched habit of focusing either on endogenous national agency or external determination in the form of American foreign policy. Hence, without a detailed study of his intellectual contexts, Rhee's political trajectory has been overshadowed by his pro-American ideological agenda with the complicity of the overseas Christian missionary enterprises serving American commercial interests.³⁶⁹ Closer inspection of Rhee's thought throughout the first decade of the twentieth century certainly reveals a nuanced intellectual development textured by the nineteenth-century American political experience and the

the foundation of the Republic of Korea and the women]. Sŏul-si, Kip'arang; Rhee, S., & Kim, H.-K. (2001). *The spirit of independence: a primer for Korean modernization and democratic reform*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press

³⁶⁸ Yu, Y.-I. (2000). *Yi Sŭng-man yŏn'gu: Tongnip undong kwa taehan mn'guk kŏn'guk* [A study of Yi Sŭng-man: independence activism and the foundation of the Republic of Korea]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, p.iii; Yu, Y.-I. (2006). Kuriun Kon'guktaetongryŏng Yisŭngman: Yisŭngman taetongryong ŭi upjok (4) – kŏsijŏk chaepyŏngga [A nostalgia for the founding president Yi sŭng-man: Yi sŭng-man's achievements (part 4)]. *Han'guk nondan*, v.206, p.133; Yu, Y.-I. (2013). *Kŏn'guk Taet'ongnyŏng Yi Sŭng-man: saengae, sasang, ŏpchŏk ŭi saeroun chomyŏng* [The founding president Yi Sŭng-man: re-evaluating his life, thought, and achievements]. Sŏul-si, Kŭlbŏtsa

³⁶⁹ See Schlesinger, Jr. A. (1974). The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism. In (ed) Fairbank, J. K. *The missionary enterprise in China and America*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press

shift in the international order consonant with the recent studies highlighting the complex history of the emergent international order in the nineteenth century.³⁷⁰

If the starting point of Rhee's intellectual investigations in the 1900s were rooted in the revolutionary ground of Jaisohn, from the mid-1900s his concerns for liberty took him to an entirely uncharted territory that reflects his American experience. Throughout his writings, what concerned him the most was to demonstrate that the United States is by far the most liberal republic in the world, far ahead of the old European monarchical states, and a model after which to re-mould the future Korea. It was in this broad backdrop on which his staunch pro-American ideology has to be situated.³⁷¹

Reading *The Spirit of Independence* (Kr: 독립정신; C: 獨立精神 written in 1903, published in 1914; henceforth *Spirit*) and Rhee's doctoral thesis from Princeton *Neutrality as Influenced by the United States* (published in 1912; henceforth *Neutrality*) helps to understand the extent to which his evolving thought in search of new political virtues was marked his newfound internationalism. Parsing his evolution of internationalism is particularly important in the analysis of Rhee's political thought because there is little in his writings by way of substantive engagement with the idea of state sovereignty. Aside from vague appeals to Rhee's activist credentials, often peppered with endorsements from the likes of Woodrow Wilson, students have been less than willing to examine how exactly Rhee understood and defined the meaning of national independence.

Calling Rhee of the 1900s a straightforward nationalist or patriot neither sheds light on the evolution of his thought during his five and half years imprisonment (1899-1904) nor his subsequent

³⁷⁰ Armitage, D. (2013). *Foundations of modern international thought*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Fabry, M. (2010). *Recognizing the States: International Society and the Establishment of New States Since 1776*. Oxford, Oxford University Press; Keene, E. (2002). *Beyond the anarchical society: Grotius, colonialism and order in world politics*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Manela, E. (2007). *The Wilsonian moment: self-determination and the international origins of anticolonial nationalism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

³⁷¹ Yu, Y. (2002). *Chölmŭn nal ŭi Yi Sŭng-man: Hansöng kamok saenghwal, 1899-1904 kwa Okchung chapki yŏn'gu* [Yi Sŭng-man as a young man: a study on his Hansöng imprisonment period, 1899-1904 and his miscellaneous writing]. Söul T'ŭkpyölsi, YöNSE Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, p.303

intellectual sojourn in the United states (1904-1910).³⁷² Under this pejorative impression his doctoral thesis *Neutrality* has been narrowly interpreted as unambiguous testimony to his patriotism which includes his publication of the *Spirit* and *The Persecution of the Korean Church* [Kr: 한국 교회 핍박] (1913: henceforth *Persecution*). Rhee's intellectual contribution was focused on identifying and hemming in a national sovereignty firmly within the matrix of international society governed by the law with a view to promoting and securing the global commercial regime and the pacification of interstate conflicts. The practicality of fleshing out and achieving this 'external recognition', far removed from the Confucian moral framework, profoundly exercised Rhee's political imagination.

I argue that the turning point in Rhee's thinking in this period was the intellectual discovery that internal efforts to reform the nation had to be met by external recognition and acknowledgment. Under the contextual scrutiny, Rhee's thinking in the 1900s betrays a curious vision which has as its epistemic backdrop an international sociality in which states without external validation are neither truly sovereign or nor effectually autonomous. This was much in keeping with contemporary liberal assumptions that the legitimacy of polity resided within as much as without the nation. The future Korean government must therefore orient itself in such a way that the satisfaction of these obligations is paramount. Rhee helped expand the parameter of national obligations to include the political imperative of interstate commerce and international cooperation. His exemplification of this principle was unique in that he subordinated the legalistic conception of sovereignty to the imperative of commercial exchange as the basis for political legitimacy and national independence.

Throughout the 1900s Rhee articulated a theory of legitimacy in international society and natural sociability, introduced the notion of international law, and negotiated a concept of national sovereignty drawn from the United States of America. This nexus of law and commerce was integral

³⁷² For the complete listing of Rhee's reading list in prison see Yu, Y. (2002). *Chŏlmŭn nal ŭi Yi Sŭng-man: Hansŏng kamok saenghwal, 1899-1904 kwa Okchung chapki yŏn'gu* [Yi Sŭng-man as a young man: a study on his Hansŏng imprisonment period, 1899-1904 and his miscellaneous writing]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, Chapter 4; Lee, C.-S. (2005). *Yi Sŭng-man ŭi kuhanmal kaehyŏk undong: kŭpchinjuŭi esŏ kidokkyo ipkungnon ŭro* [Yi Sŭng-man's enlightenment activism in the late Chosŏn period: from political radicalism to Christian national foundation]. Taejŏn Kwangyŏksi, Paejae Tahakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.109-112

to the view of Anglo-American Christian spread of liberty which conceived of the end of the international legal regime as the pacification of the oceans so as to promote and secure global commerce. Analysing how this dual political imperative, law and commerce, was historically conjoined to his envisioning of Protestant Christianity and liberty is the main purpose of this chapter.

Anti-Catholicism and anti-Confucianism

Some of my neighbors said that this was a Catholic school...

it would not do to be found with the Catholics so I left.³⁷³

With the second expulsion of Philip Jaisohn in 1898 and the royal edict outlawing the People's Assembly in Christmas of 1898 the brief window of revolutionary moment was all but over.³⁷⁴ Rhee and other young radicals were imprisoned the following January for charges of conspiracy to overthrow the monarchy and found a republic.³⁷⁵ Largely thanks to the interventions of influential Anglo-American missionaries Rhee's sentence was commuted to incarceration despite his armed escape attempt that left one prison guard dead before the trial.³⁷⁶ During the imprisonment he remained unusually prolific, secretly translating foreign texts, authoring political and historical works,

³⁷³ Davies, D. M. (1988). *The life and thought of Henry Gerhard Appenzeller (1858-1902), missionary to Korea*. Lewiston, N.Y., USA, E. Mellen Press, p.196

³⁷⁴ See page 64.

³⁷⁵ See Yi, C.-S. (2005). *Yi Süng-man üi kuhanmal kaehyök undong: küpchinjuüi esö kidokkyo ipkungnon üro* [Yi Süng-man's enlightenment activism in the late Chosön period: from political radicalism to Christian national foundation]. Taejön Kwangyöksi, Paejae Tahakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu; Lee, C.-S., Kwön, K.-B., & Lee, C.-S. (2002). *Ch'odae Taet'ongnyöng Yi Süng-man üi ch'öngnyön sijöl* [The first president Yi Süng-man as a young man]. Söul-si, Tonga Ilbosa; Yu, Y. (2002). *Chölmün nal üi Yi Süng-man: Hansöng kamok saenghwal, 1899-1904 kwa Okchung chapki yön'gu* [Yi Süng-man as a young man: a study on his Hansöng imprisonment period, 1899-1904 and his miscellaneous writing]. Söul T'ükyölsi, Yönsé Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.13-15. See also Yun, C.-H. (1899). *Diary*, January 9 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0020_0010_0040: last accessed July 14, 2016). Yun Ch'i-ho blamed Rhee for jeopardising the entire *Independence* camp: 'Now, can we hold ourselves responsible for the private conduct and thoughts of Yi Sung Man?'

³⁷⁶ Yu, Y. (2002). *Chölmün nal üi Yi Süng-man: Hansöng kamok saenghwal, 1899-1904 kwa Okchung chapki yön'gu* [Yi Süng-man as a young man: a study on his Hansöng imprisonment period, 1899-1904 and his miscellaneous writing]. Söul T'ükyölsi: Yönsé Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.16-17

and anonymously publishing newspaper editorials.³⁷⁷ He also converted to Methodism at some point, though he remained very close to Presbyterian ministers. Pardoned in August 1904, Rhee was dispatched to the United States, allegedly, to present a secret royal memorial to prominent American politicians likely to be sympathetic to the plight of Korean nation. Though unclear as to the chain of events on which we still have very scant evidence, by February next year Rhee was enrolled in George Washington University as a recipient of the ministerial scholarship through the missionary contacts.³⁷⁸ But instead of pursuing the path of missionary back to Korea as his benefactors originally wished, Rhee continued his educational climb which culminated in his doctorate degree from Princeton University in 1910.³⁷⁹

Spanning less than six years in total, Rhee's intellectual turnaround from the question of loyalty/rebellion to the formalisation of politics within the framework of law is nothing short of remarkable. His private discussions about 'the future of the kingdom when the kingship would be abolished' with the Anglo-American missionaries at the height of the popular upheaval in 1898 indicates Rhee's involvement with revolutionary radicalism.³⁸⁰ Nonetheless, with only a handful of ideological tenets from Jaisohn, Rhee apparently 'had not a program but only an attitude'.³⁸¹ To those near him Rhee's political radicalism bordering on recklessness was such that some felt that

³⁷⁷ For full list of the books, see Yu, Y.-I. (2002). *Chŏlmŭn nal ŭi Yi Sŭng-man: Hansŏng kamok saenghwal, 1899-1904 kwa Okchung chapki yŏn'gu* [Yi Sŭng-man as a young man: a study on his Hansŏng imprisonment period, 1899-1904 and his miscellaneous writing]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.104-107

³⁷⁷ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, p.95

³⁷⁸ His biographer Son admits that Rhee's decision to go to the United States was more to do with the personal ambition for education rather than delivering the royal memorial as his defenders often claim. See Son, S.-I. (2008). *Yi Sŭng-man kwa Kim Ku, 1875-1919: yangban to kkaeŏra sangnom to kkaeŏra, 1-pu, 2-kwŏn* [Yi Sŭng-man and Kim Ku, 1875-1919: rise up, yangban and commoners alike]. Kyŏnggi-do P'aju-si, Nanam, pp.237-240; Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, p.97

³⁷⁹ For an emblematic account of Rhee's American period, see Yu, Y.-I. (2014). *The making of the first Korean president: Syngman Rhee's quest for independence 1875 - 1948*. Honolulu, Univ. of Hawai'i Press, pp.24-36

³⁸⁰ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, p.95

³⁸¹ Allen, R. C., & Rhee, S. (1960). *Korea's Syngman Rhee. An unauthorised portrait. [With illustrations, including portraits.]*. Charles E. Tuttle Co, Rutland, Vt., Tokyo, p.41; Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, p.27; Ko, C.-H. (1986). *Kaehwagi Yi Sŭng-man ŭi sasang hyŏngsŏng kwa hwaldong* [Yi Sŭng-man's thought and activism during the enlightenment period]. *Yŏksa hakbo*, v.109, p.45

Rhee thought ‘never of consequences’ and ‘[showed] very little sense’.³⁸² Likewise the American minister to Chosŏn, Horace Allen was weary of ‘a young man who was showing distinct evidence of rebellion’ and kept as much distance from him as possible.³⁸³ And yet, it is worth noting that the tone of intellectual if not personal animosity against the monarch so palpable in Jaisohn’s writings is conspicuously absent in Rhee who displayed no real interest in publicly challenging the monarchical authority.³⁸⁴

This ambivalence vis-à-vis the monarch is certainly related to the extent to which Rhee behind bars ‘[gave] little attention, let alone sympathy, to the popular movement’, a fact that has mystified his defenders given his political activism prior to 1899.³⁸⁵ Relishing the news of the Boxers’ defeat in Beijing and calling them ‘a gang [Kr: 비도; C: 匪徒] vent on plundering and murdering’ Rhee thought the ‘*Tonghak* thugs deserve to meet the same fate.’³⁸⁶ His rejection seems hardly grounded in some sort of ‘pacifism’ as his defenders claim.³⁸⁷ In the epilogue of the *Spirit*, Rhee summarised his attitude with respect to such popular movements: ‘the foolishness of the people [which] is the quickest shortcut to the demise of a nation’ because the motive behind such movements is

³⁸² Yun, C.-H. (1899). *Diary*. January 30 (http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_028_0020_0010_0110: last accessed July 14, 2016)

³⁸³ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, pp.26-27

³⁸⁴ Chang, K.-S. (2010). Han’guk kyohoe p’ippack e natanan Yi Sŭng-man ŭl ch’ongkyo insik kwa oekyo tongnipron [Rhee’s views on religion and diplomatic efforts for independence as shown in *The Persecution of Korean Christianity*]. *Han’guk Sasang hakbo*, v.35, n.52, p.227. In fact, in the United States Rhee positively touted his ‘royal lineage’ whenever it suited the occasion, see Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, pp.101-102; Yu, Y.-I. (2014). *The making of the first Korean president: Syngman Rhee’s quest for independence, 1875-1948*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, p.283. Ko Chŏng-hyu’s study calls into question of his royal lineage. See Ko, C.-H. (1986). Kaehwagi Yi Sŭng-man ŭi sasang hyŏngsŏng kwa hwaldong [Yi Sŭng-man’s thought and activism during the enlightenment period]. *Yŏksa hakbo*, v.109, pp.25-27

³⁸⁵ Rhee, S., & Kim, H.-K. (2001). *The spirit of independence: a primer for Korean modernization and democratic reform*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, p.21

³⁸⁶ Rhee, S., Kim, Y.-S., Kim, H.-S., & Yu, S.-C. (2015). *Shwipke p’urŏ ssŭn Ch’ŏng-Il chŏn’gi* [Ch’ŏng-Il chŏn’gi easily explained]. Sŏul-si: Puk aen P’ip’ŭl, p.26, 49, 340

³⁸⁷ Yu, Y. (2002). *Chŏlmŭn nal ŭi Yi Sŭng-man: Hansŏng kamok saenghwal, 1899-1904 kwa Okchung chapki yŏn’gu* [Yi Sŭng-man as a young man: a study on his Hansŏng imprisonment period, 1899-1904 and his miscellaneous writing]. Sŏul T’ŭkpyŏlsi, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’anbu, p.116, 155

essentially due to 'the mistaken practice of benighted people hating an outsider without a just cause.'³⁸⁸

Certainly there were no shortage of elites' criticisms against the popular revolts in contemporary Chosŏn; scholars such as Hwang Hyŏn [Kr: 황현; c: 黄玹; b.1855-1910] suspected the 'disloyal' motives and excoriated superstitious acts popular revolts.³⁸⁹ But Rhee differed in that he singularly focused on the political risks issuing from the outside; by destabilising the delicate balance of power, rebellions of this kind not only bring about their own annihilation, but also endanger the entire nation via foreign military interventions.³⁹⁰ Such a line of criticism, couched in the realist framework rather than a Confucian moralism, was undoubtedly forged and magnified by the exposure to the international reports carried in the American Protestant magazines such as the *Outlook* and the *Independent* in which Rhee immersed himself.³⁹¹ In these magazines were found endless reports of local insurrections in Cuba and the Philippines by the outrageous 'republicans', most famously personified by Emilio Aguinaldo. These coverages were dutifully followed by the moral and political rationale for American military interventions.³⁹²

Further revealing is Rhee's silence on the issue of the Philippines, because no other contemporary events would have been as relevant to Chosŏn as the annexation of the islands by their supposed

³⁸⁸ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chŏngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, T'aep'yŏngyang Ch'ulp'ansa, pp.201-203

³⁸⁹ See Pak, M.-S. (2010). Maech'ŏn hwanghyŏn ŭi tonghaknongminkun kwa ilponkun e taehan insik [Maech'ŏn Hwang Hyŏn's perception regarding Tonghak peasant army and the Japanese military]. *Han'guk kŭnhyŏntaesa yŏn'gu*, v.55, pp.34-60; Pak, K.-S. (2010). Maech'ŏn hwanghyŏn ŭi tangtaesa insik ŭl tullŏssan nonŭi [Discussions on Maech'ŏn Hwang hyŏn's views on contemporary events]. *Han'guk kŭnhyŏntaesa yŏn'gu*, v.55, pp.61-89

³⁹⁰ Rhee, S., Kim, Y.-S., Kim, H.-S., & Yu, S.-C. (2015). *Shwipke p'urŏ ssŭn Ch'ŏng-Il chŏn'gi* [Ch'ŏng-Il chŏn'gi easily explained]. Sŏul-si, Puk aen P'ip'ŭl. pp.46-47

³⁹¹ Ko, C.-H. (1986). Kaehwagi Yi Sŭng-man ŭi sasang hyŏngsŏng kwa hwaldong [Yi Sŭng-man's thought and activism during the enlightenment period]. *Yŏksa hakbo*, v.109, p.48; Son, S.-I. (2008). *Yi Sŭng-man kwa Kim Ku, 1875-1919: yangban to kkaeŏra sangnom to kkaeŏra, 1-pu, 2-kwŏn* [Yi Sŭng-man and Kim Ku, 1875-1919: rise up, yangban and commoners alike]. Kyŏnggi-do P'aju-si, Nanam, pp.107-110

³⁹² Jacobson, M. F. (2000). *Barbarian virtues: the United States encounters foreign peoples at home and abroad, 1876-1917*. New York, Hill and Wang, p.227

liberator, the United States.³⁹³ Nearly all the individuals consequential to Rhee's future intellectual development and political career, including Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, George Kennan, William Elliot Griffis, and Hannis Taylor, were vocal partisans in favour of the colonisation scheme. Hannis Taylor, a southern constitutional jurist who taught law at George Washington University when Rhee was enrolled there fully supported Roosevelt's plan for colonisation.³⁹⁴ Theodore Roosevelt famously wrote that 'The Philippines form our heel of Achilles' and urged a rapid takeover.³⁹⁵ William Elliot Griffis, of *The Hermit Kingdom* fame, declared the Spanish-American War an event which 'made the Far East a Near East', and wished that Americans would wake up to 'the necessity of national expansion.'³⁹⁶ Most consequential of all, Woodrow Wilson held the view that republican revolution in the Philippines was illegitimate because Aguinaldo '[offered] the Philippines liberty without order, and that was not true liberty at all.'³⁹⁷

But the ideological subtext to which Rhee responded most readily in these accounts was the segment of anti-Catholicism. Present in all accounts with the exception of Hannis Taylor, the ideological visions of those listed above featured strong biases against Roman Catholicism which they considered fundamentally incompatible with the Protestant liberty.³⁹⁸ As Josiah Strong, one of Rhee's favourite American commentators argued that Roman Catholicism, Mormonism and intemperance were fundamentally 'incompatible with the Protestant civilisation' representative of

³⁹³ Rhee, S. (1904). Nonsöl: Ilbon chöngch'aek e taehan taegang üikyön [Editorial: some rough thought on Japan's foreign policy]. *Cheguk Sinmun*, September 15; Son, S.-I. (2008). *Yi Süng-man kwa Kim Ku, 1875-1919: yangban to kkaeöra sangnom to kkaeöra, 1-pu, 2-kwön* [Yi Süng-man and Kim Ku, 1875-1919: rise up, yangban and commoners alike]. Kyönggi-do P'aju-si, Nanam, p.224

³⁹⁴ McWilliams, T. S. (1978). *Hannis Taylor: the new Southerner as an American*. University of Alabama Press, p.70

³⁹⁵ Pringle, H. F. (1939). *The life and times of William Howard Taft: A biography*, Vol.1. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, p.301

³⁹⁶ Chang, G. H. (2015). *Fateful ties: A history of America's preoccupation with China*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, pp.100-101

³⁹⁷ Manela, E. (2010). 'Peoples of Many Races': The World beyond Europe in the Wilsonian Imagination. In (eds) Cooper, J. M., & Knock, T. J. (2010). *Jefferson, Lincoln, and Wilson: the American dilemma of race and democracy*. Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, p.196

³⁹⁸ See McGreevy, J. T. (2003). *Catholicism and American freedom: a history*. New York, W.W. Norton; Fenton, E. A. (2011). *Religious liberties: anti-Catholicism and liberal democracy in nineteenth-century U.S. literature and culture*. Oxford, Oxford University Press; see also Chapter 3, *passim*

the United States.³⁹⁹ The simmering anti-Catholicism, together with the sensational reports of the colonisation of Vietnam by France and the Spanish possessions in Southeast Asia virtually lend itself to this sort of propaganda.⁴⁰⁰ The outbreaks of political repercussions and sectarian violence in Chosŏn were held responsible by ‘some individuals who rely on the Catholic Church and boast of its protection’.⁴⁰¹ Echoing this in his prison editorials, Rhee portrayed Roman Catholicism in terms of corrupting and illiberal political influences on the ground that the Roman Catholic encroachment against the state ‘always appropriate[s] forces unbecoming of religion unto itself’.⁴⁰² Public disquiet in Chosŏn regarding Roman Catholicism ran deep after the century-long persecution and the French military campaign off the coast in 1866, so much so that Roman Catholicism or *Ch’ŏnchuhak* passed as a byword for foreign invasion and domestic subversion. For over half a century the Confucian scholars critical of Roman Catholicism attacked the religion as ‘a lesser branch of Buddhism’, a ‘fable that only rural children would find plausible’, and ‘debased barbarian customs’ ignorant of the moral value of parents and kings.⁴⁰³ Likening Roman Catholicism to seditious conspiracy and foreign invasion in Chosŏn found a receptive audience in the wake of the series of political crises since the 1860s: Jaisohn alluded to treason and disloyalty and Yun to their ineluctable politico-spiritual corruption. Over and over Jaisohn publicly had to disavow that ‘Christianity is no Tong Hak [sic] or rebellious doctrine’⁴⁰⁴, and the similar sentiment was at work when Rhee’s mother was appalled that Rhee befriended a Catholic fanatic [Kr: 천주학꾼] at the mission school.⁴⁰⁵

³⁹⁹ La Faber, W. (1998). *The new empire: an interpretation of American expansion: 1860-1898*. Ithaca, Cornell University press, p.77

⁴⁰⁰ See Kang, Y.-S. (2014). 1900 nyŏntae tongasia ūi wŏllam mangguksa yutong kwa suyong – han’guk, chungguk, wŏlnam ūl chungsim ūro [the circulation and reception of the *wŏllam mangguksa* in East Asia in the 1900s: with the focus on Korea, China and Vietnam]. *Ihwa sahak yŏn’gu*, v.49, pp.93-102

⁴⁰¹ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chŏngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Sŏul T’ŭkpyŏlsi, T’aep’yŏngyang Ch’ulp’ansa, p.121

⁴⁰² Rhee, S. (1903). Sesang e pyŏngin I itnun goro ūiwon I ssulde itnani [The ill patients are there for hospitals]. *Sinhak Wŏlbo*, n.9

⁴⁰³ Kim, S.-T. (2004). Kaehwagi kiddokyo chŏnp’a ūi sahoe, munhwajok ūimi. In (eds) *Kaehwagi han’guk kwa segye ūi sangho kyoryu* [The Korean enlightenment period and the intellectual exchange with the world]. Seoul, Kukhak Charyowŏn, p.204

⁴⁰⁴ Speer, R. E. (1898). *Missions and politics in Asia: Studies of the spirit of the eastern peoples, the present making of history in Asia, and the part therein of Christian missions*. New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., p.254

⁴⁰⁵ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, pp.60-61

This line of thought represents more than a sentiment of sectarian rivalry but an ideal backdrop on which to flesh out juridico-moral sins of despotism and slavery inherent in Roman Catholicism. Realising the intense hostility against Roman Catholicism on the ground, the American Protestant missionaries not unhappily amplified the fear by way of conflating Roman Catholicism with voluntary servitude and abdication of spiritual freedom and called it 'a false religion... as a socially inhibiting perpetuator of poverty and degradation'.⁴⁰⁶ For Rhee, the pernicious influence of Catholic absolutism in the western history had been such that 'western absolutism fared far worse than that those in the East' as exemplified by the bravado of the French king Louis XIV. Men of true faith had to wait until Martin Luther broke the chain of spiritual enslavement, thereby giving birth to 'liberty, the foundation of modern civilisation' whilst Roman Catholic countries 'still ban the New Testament' for fear of the spiritual liberty to which it would give rise.⁴⁰⁷ His anti-Catholic prejudice was brought to an ecstatic jubilation when he learned that the United States was at war with the Spanish empire. The Protestant magazines such as the *Outlook*, the *Independent*, *Christian Advocate*, the *Gospel in All Lands* smuggled into the prison provided scintillating accounts of the Spanish-American War of 1898 over Cuba and the annexation of the Philippines, apparently, as part of American global efforts to abolish slavery and serve as the beacon of liberty.⁴⁰⁸

This anti-Catholic bias was evidently at work for as late as 1923 when Rhee criticised Roman Catholicism as the universal oppressor of private rights and private property similar to communism.⁴⁰⁹ To this well-established invective of foreign conspiracy and subversive doctrine Rhee only needed to gloss a layer of intellectual plausibility: the Popish plot to suppress the national

⁴⁰⁶ Wolffe, J. (2013). North Atlantic Anti-Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Overview. *European Studies*, v.31, n.1, p.27; see Chapter 3 *passim*

⁴⁰⁷ Rhee, S. (1998). *Ihwajang sojang Unam Yi Sŭng-man munsŏ: 2-kwon* [The collection of Yi Sŭng-man documents in Ilhwajang]. Seoul, Chungang Ilbosa, pp.495-496

⁴⁰⁸ For the Protestant periodical lists, see Yu, Y. (2002). *Chŏlmŭn nal ŭi Yi Sŭng-man: Hansŏng kamok saenghwal, 1899-1904 kwa Okchung chapki yŏn'gu* [Yi Sŭng-man as a young man: a study on his Hansŏng imprisonment period, 1899-1904 and his miscellaneous writing]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.66-69. For the Philippines, see Salman, M. (2001). *The embarrassment of slavery: controversies over bondage and nationalism in the American colonial Philippines*. Berkeley, University of California Press

⁴⁰⁹ Rhee, S. (1923). Kongsantang ŭi tangputang [Right and wrong of communist party]. *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi*, March 3

autonomy and confessionalise Chosŏn into Catholicism, a sectarian suspicion lasting well into the 1950s.⁴¹⁰ The spirit of liberty and equality in the Anglo-Saxon countries, maintained Rhee, arose 'not because of their race' but as a result of their religion.⁴¹¹ In contrast, the enlightening virtue of Protestantism rested in the 'respectful distance' maintained by the Protestant churches from politics 'so as to not impinge one with the other'.⁴¹² Rhee praised the political wisdom unique to 'the Protestants that distinguish politics and church so as to avoid the pain of confusion'.⁴¹³

Thus if *Tonghak* imperilled the domestic peace, Roman Catholicism provided the ideal template to project the spectre of foreign menace. It is, however, worth noting that Rhee's anti-Catholicism and anti-Confucianism had an air of intellectual complacency much in line with his inherited political radicalism. Lacking the visceral pitch of Yun Ch'i-ho's anti-Catholicism or the urgent resolve of Jaisohn's anti-monarchism, Rhee's remarks on the *political* evils of Roman Catholicism owed its studied *conventionality* as much to the pre-war American Nativism as to the home-grown fear pervasive in Chosŏn at that time.

Rhee's ideological rejection of Roman Catholicism and Confucianism notwithstanding, it was still unclear as to what would replace the entrenched political thought in Chosŏn. He was indeed at a loss 'if he had been given responsibility for building something new to take its place'.⁴¹⁴ Lectures on democracy he delivered to his fellow inmates during his imprisonment were still couched in terms of the Confucian obedience and moral edification between the ruler and the ruled: 'Subjects must serve the ruler with reverence and according to right principles; the ruler in turn must edify the people with virtue so the people will obey him from their hearts'.⁴¹⁵ But surely in order to redress the 'corroding corruption and inefficiency in the decaying monarchy' something more than loyalty

⁴¹⁰ *Kiddok kongbo*. (1952) Yisŭngman hubo e taehayŏ [Regarding the candidate Rhee Syngman], July 4

⁴¹¹ Rhee, S. (1998). *Ihwajang sojang Unam Yi Sŭng-man munsŏ: 2-kwon* [The collection of Yi Sŭng-man documents in Ilhwajang]. Seoul, Chungang Ilbosa, p.491

⁴¹² Rhee, S. (1903). *Tugachi p'yŏnpyŏktoem*. [Two prejudices]. *Sinhak Wŏlbo*, September

⁴¹³ Rhee, S. (1903). *Tugachi p'yŏnpyŏktoem*. [Two prejudices]. *Sinhak Wŏlbo*, September

⁴¹⁴ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, p.62

⁴¹⁵ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, pp.58-59; Rhee, S. (1901). Chŏngsa ŭi kŭnpon ŭn saengchon p'ilsu [The foundation of politics is survival]. *Cheguk sinmun*, March 4

and obedience would have been necessary to revitalise the moral fabric of Chosŏn.⁴¹⁶ Up to 1904, Rhee's stress on liberty lacked the concrete proposal by which to realise itself other than by means of quasi-religious edification (Kr: 교화; C: 教化). Clearly secular polity was in need of a new moral regime to establish an enduring political stability and facilitate social transformation.⁴¹⁷ The intellectual effort on the part of Rhee to re-situate political thinking away on a completely novel plane is evident in his writings which culminated in his seminal political treatises, *The Spirit of Independence*.

In *Spirit*, whose first twenty four chapters were composed in prison, it is clear that Rhee's search for new political morality reached the normative idea of liberty: 'Nothing is so important to man as his freedom. Man is born with a natural right to freedom and this is only given to man as a fundamental right.'⁴¹⁸ Undoubtedly attractive to anyone in physical confinement, Rhee's ideational gravitation was as yet vague as to what freedom actually signified in practical terms – the mentions of freedom are devoid of conceptual coordinates and even a starting point. The one thing clear in Rhee's mind was that there was a strong correlation between liberty and Protestant religion. Whilst some commentators find Rhee's conflation of Christianity and politics in breach of the separation of church and state, others sought to minimise his political Protestantism, attributing incoherent arguments and erroneous facts as issuing from the restrictive circumstances and limited information available at that time.⁴¹⁹ In fact, the underlying proposition that political liberty arose thanks to Protestantism and the United States is absolutely central in his thinking, a point belaboured by Rhee throughout his subsequent career. Rhee was categorical in the epilogue of *Spirit* that the coming

⁴¹⁶ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, p.65

⁴¹⁷ Rhee, S. (1998). *Ilhwajang sojang Unam Yi Sŭng-man munsŏ: 2-kwon* [The collection of Yi Sŭng-man documents in Ilhwajang]. Seoul, Chungang Ilbosa, p.486

⁴¹⁸ Kim, K.-S. (1984). *Yi Sŭng-man*. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Kyesŏng Ch'ulp'ansa, p.66

⁴¹⁹ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, p.59

new moral society must be founded upon 'the fear of divine sanction and love for heavenly rewards' and mindful of the fact that 'God sent us Jesus Christ' out of His love.⁴²⁰

It was not until Rhee broke down liberty vis-à-vis Protestantism to its two sub-components, the regime of trade and international law, that the broader ideology of global regime of exchange and circulation came into sharp focus. By assimilating the regime of exchange and trade into the domain of liberty, Rhee was able to establish the politico-moral coherence of both: commerce was elevated to the realm of virtue, and liberty gained a concrete instrument by which to realise its empire.⁴²¹ Most importantly, for Rhee it was inconceivable that the standard of liberty and free trade flew under the Star-Spangled Banner merely as a coincidence.

Trade as political morality

Commerce follows the missionaries.

Public Opinion, February 8, 1890

They will have to insist that currency be permitted to our ideas – liberty to exchange [...]

William Alexander Parrons Martin⁴²²

How the concept of trade came to occupy the centre of gravity in Rhee's conceptual universe from the early 1900s onwards is crucial to understanding his transition from earlier radicalism into a normative programme of liberal trade regime, a feature central to Rhee's subsequent political trajectory in the following decades. To come to grip with this shift, his treatment of the dynamic

⁴²⁰ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chöngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Söul T'ükp'yölsi, T'aep'yöngyang Ch'ulp'ansa, p.233

⁴²¹ Yu, Y. (2002). *Chölmün nal ūi Yi Söng-man: Hansöng kamok saenghwal, 1899-1904 kwa Okchung chapki yön'gu* [Yi Söng-man as a young man: a study on his Hansöng imprisonment period, 1899-1904 and his miscellaneous writing]. Söul T'ükp'yölsi: Yönsae Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.304-306

⁴²² Martin, W. A. P. (1901). *The love of Cathay; or, The intellect of China*. New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., p.2

relations between the free and unfettered regime of mutual exchange on the one hand and the moral advantages of *political* Protestantism on the other hand outlined in his two major works in the 1900s, *Spirit* and *Neutrality*, requires close scrutiny. In a number of arresting passages in both *Neutrality* and *Spirit* the idea of trade makes possible not only future commercial prosperity but political salvation and civic enlightenment. Placed under a broader span, *Spirit* and *Neutrality* constituted a two-part answer as to how Protestantism relates to and facilitates mutual exchange and collegial intercourse.

Enumerating values Rhee considered essential to political independence, ‘the promotion of commerce, adoption of new scholarship, emphasis on diplomacy and sovereignty, collegiality and respect for liberty’, commerce enjoyed pride of place.⁴²³ At this point the function of exchange registers less a moral imperative than a series of rhetorical talking points. What Rhee lacked was the intellectual confidence and conceptual competence to exert ‘mutual exchange’ as a respectable political criterion the same way as private property was for Jaisohn. I have shown that Rhee’s framing of liberty was initially in response to the dangers of Roman Catholicism: highlighting a regime of unfettered circulation and free exchange was ideologically motivated insofar as Roman Catholicism, much as Confucianism did for Jaisohn earlier, was construed as an oppressive engine of despotism, enabled by the foreign intrigues and the papal conspiracy. Along the way, however, Rhee discovered a pocket of liberal conceptual resource on the basis of which to evaluate the political benefits of free exchange and mutual intercourse.

By the end of *Spirit*, Rhee was able to rearrange the ideational architecture inherited from Jaisohn in such a way that exchange and intercourse were tantamount to the notion of freedom in defence of which Protestant religion arose *historically*. To wit, no longer was it sufficient to criticise isolationism, unlawful expropriation and the monopoly of scriptural interpretation to persuade the audience; the

⁴²³ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chöngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Söul T'ükpyölsi, T'aep'yöngyang Ch'ulp'ansa,

political benefit of exchange and trade had to be self-evident and intelligible to the Koreans.⁴²⁴ If Jaisohn tapped into the inarticulate sense of moral outrage by predicating the language of loyalty with the defence of private property, Rhee fashioned the ways in which to conceive of liberty – a supreme political virtue – in connection with the idea of trade and exchange. Re-balancing the sanctification of private property to the unfettered disposal thereof as a divine mandate was at the heart of his political and moral aim: ‘when one reflects on the true reason of the creation of the universe... [it] is so that it could be disposed for the convenience of the humanity.’⁴²⁵

Challenging the conventional laments that the predicament of Chosŏn was caused by the natural-historical vicissitude of the dynastic rise and fall, Rhee maintained that it was due to the arresting of natural circulation of men and goods by the Chosŏn governmental policy.⁴²⁶ When Rhee contended that ‘[valuable] possessions do not produce any benefit... if they are merely hoarded’, he reasoned that goods out of the circuit of exchange possess no inherent value; that value of goods derives only from the fact of interdependence and sociality.⁴²⁷ Used interchangeably with adjacent terms like intercourse [Kr: 통; C: 通] or traffic [Kr: 교통; C: 交通], according to Rhee, traffic and exchange occur not because of selfish and debased motives but arise in conformity with the natural desire to socialise and emotive concerns for the welfare of others – in other words, in harmony with the order of natural sociability. William Elliot Griffis’ opinion that ‘for centuries the hermit’s policy had been pursued of keeping out foreigners, devastating the frontiers, and *restraining the people inside the country*’ would be reversed with the help of American missionaries would have encapsulated this American Protestant perspective.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁴ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chŏngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Sŏul T’ŭkpyŏlsi, T’aep’yŏngyang Ch’ulp’ansa, p.21

⁴²⁵ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chŏngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Sŏul T’ŭkpyŏlsi, T’aep’yŏngyang Ch’ulp’ansa, p.25

⁴²⁶ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chŏngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Sŏul T’ŭkpyŏlsi, T’aep’yŏngyang Ch’ulp’ansa, p.22

⁴²⁷ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chŏngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Sŏul T’ŭkpyŏlsi, T’aep’yŏngyang Ch’ulp’ansa, p.223

⁴²⁸ Griffis, W. E. (1898). America in the Far East. – IV. What Americans have done in Japan. *The Outlook*, v.18, n.60, p.1056 (my emphasis)

Prefacing this idea in Chapter 6 'Reinforcing the idea of independence', Rhee overturned the conventional Confucian rhetoric which likened westerners to beasts by suggesting that it was the anti-social isolation that alienated Chosŏn from the rest of the world and reduced the people of Chosŏn to the abject bestial state.⁴²⁹ 'Locking the gates shut and thinking that one would do well by oneself', wrote Rhee 'not only endangers oneself but *encumbers* others'.⁴³⁰ For Rhee the isolation, or voluntary act of depriving other of one's own natural goods, was detrimental to the *common good*. This point was articulated to Rhee's other assertion that international trade would eliminate war by means of 'peaceful intercourse to the enrichment of all' and 'the general state of equality through equalising power of trade'.⁴³¹

Unlike in the days of old when nations waged war over territory in pursuit of wealth, power and glory, nations now engage 'in peaceful intercourse of commerce for whose security and safekeeping the law of nations came into existence'.⁴³² Collegiality amongst nations and goodwill could only arise when there is a flow of exchange, as opposed to production which gives rise to competition and antagonism. This discovery occasioned in Rhee's thinking the privileging of exchange over production.⁴³³ Noteworthy in his new orientation is the relegation of agriculture as the key generative site of political virtue. As he put it, 'in Chosŏn people complain of how foreign merchants sweep all the rice away, but in fact it is being enjoyed all across the world'.⁴³⁴ Agrarian production without external outlet resulted in stagnancy and tyranny whilst exchange and intercourse facilitated equality and liberty. Trade, situated in the dense network of social and moral economy,

⁴²⁹ For the descriptions of the feral nature of Europeans see Hong, H.-J., Kim, Y.-J., & Chin, C.-G. (2013). *19-segi kyŏnmun chisik ūi ch'ukchŏk kwa chisik ūi t'ansaeng: chisu yŏmp'il = Accumulation of audio-visual information and birth of knowledge in the 19th century : Jisuyeompil*, p.145

⁴³⁰ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chŏngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, T'aep'yŏngyang Ch'ulp'ansa, p.22 (my emphasis)

⁴³¹ Rhee, S. (1903). Nonsŏl: Oeguk t'ongsang pigyo [Comparing foreign trade regime]. *Cheguk sinmun*, March 13

⁴³² Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chŏngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, T'aep'yŏngyang Ch'ulp'ansa, p.200

⁴³³ Son, S.-I. (2008). *Yi Sŭng-man kwa Kim Ku, 1875-1919: yangban to kkaeŏra sangnom to kkaeŏra, 1-pu, 2-kwŏn* [Yi Sŭng-man and Kim Ku, 1875-1919: rise up, yangban and commoners alike]. Kyŏnggi-do P'aju-si, Nanam, pp.134-137

⁴³⁴ Rhee, S. (1903). Nonsŏl: Oeguk t'ongsang pigyo [Comparing foreign trade regime]. *Cheguk sinmun*, March 13

conferred political legitimacy and ideological purchase. The political virtue and international morality was no longer held in *terra firma* but out in the sea.⁴³⁵

His realist caveats that awkwardly attended his normative propositions, such as ‘my treasures will become useless in my possession if the nation is endangered...[there] is no alternative but to become active and join forces... to benefit me and others as well’ only serve to highlight the moral imperative of the former.⁴³⁶ The anarchic vision of international order in grip of conflicts found a point of equilibrium in the regime of commercial trade. The glowing approval with which Rhee quoted the statement by the British foreign secretary George Curzon with regard to Chosŏn that ‘the most significant principle of our diplomatic effort is to promote and facilitate our commerce’ indicates that it is not the vastness of land, the strength of army, nor the size of population that indexes the enlightenment of a state.⁴³⁷ Rhee reiterated how renewing this intercourse with neighbours would resurrect the aboriginal social morality sanctioned by God but destroyed by Confucian teachings. This Protestant idea of sociability embedded in this conceptual model condemned ancient and contemporary Confucianism for ‘[nourishing] pride’ that stunts spiritual faith; finally, it breeds a reprehensible system of rank and class that ‘[classifies] women with menials and slaves’⁴³⁸ by the ancient sages who ‘taught that some men are better than other men’, thereby encouraging the fundamental belief in human inequality.⁴³⁹ To the same effect Rhee argued that ‘the [Confucian] edification had been debased in the middle [...] because it does not know the true and accurate meaning of love’.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁵ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chŏngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Sŏul T’ŭkpyŏlsi, T’aep’yŏngyang Ch’ulp’ansa, p.200; Rhee, S. (1903). Nonsŏl: Oeguk tongsang pikyo yŏnsok. *Chekuksinmun*, March 13 [Editorial: foreign trade comparison (part 2)]

⁴³⁶ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chŏngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Sŏul T’ŭkpyŏlsi, T’aep’yŏngyang Ch’ulp’ansa, p.223

⁴³⁷ Rhee, S., Kim, Y.-S., Kim, H.-S., & Yu, S.-C. (2015). *Shwipke p’urŏ ssŭn Ch’ŏng-Il chŏn’gi* [Ch’ŏng-Il chŏn’gi easily explained]. Sŏul-si: Puk aen P’ip’ŭl, p.337

⁴³⁸ Yun, C.-H. (1895). Confucianism in Korea, *Korean Repository*, November, pp.400-404

⁴³⁹ Jones, G. H. (1898). Open Korea and the Methodist Mission. *The Gospel in All Lands*, September, p.391

⁴⁴⁰ Rhee, S. (1902). Sarangham e man’guk manmin ŭl yŏnhap hanŭn him [Love is the force that unites all men and nations]. *Chaeguk Sinmun*, October 21.

This moralisation of exchange was intimately tied to the two most visible agents familiar to Rhee at that time: foreign merchants and Anglo-American missionaries. For the ideologues it was not a mere blushing coincidence that Anglo-American Protestant missionaries were extensively engaged in commercial trading and vice versa.⁴⁴¹ In fact, this merchant-missionary dovetailed into his explanation of the spread of freedom by Protestantism. In place of armed revolutionaries, Rhee believed that Christians missionaries, who 'merely wished to save the Korean souls' would become the 'unforeseen agents of liberty that will spark the political revolution'.⁴⁴² And precisely for this reason, Rhee argued that 'international law stipulates special protection [for evangelical work], and the modern civilized world is particularly solicitous' to it.⁴⁴³

The heavy emphasis on trade and commerce, smacking of 'modern' economic rationality and of man reducible to the framework of possessive individualism and capitalistic economy, has led many to diagnose the insalubrious marriage between 'God and Mammon' in his thought. Rhee's near-dogmatic celebration of trade was held to be to an endorsement of American expansionism, commercial capitalism, missionary imperialism and social Darwinism. But informing Rhee's ideological outlook was neither that Protestantism offered an ethical disposition most amenable to capitalistic mode of production nor that the theology of election consisted of secular salvation. Social Darwinism was incapable of furnishing both internal and external principles for liberal international order and its complex yet coherent coordination. The doctrine of social Darwinism, 'every man for himself' proved not only deficient in terms of the prescriptive moral aspects but more importantly clashed with his newfound faith in Christianity.⁴⁴⁴ Expansionism in the United States rarely made the explicit reference to the capitalistic or social Darwinism so casually imputed by the

⁴⁴¹ For Rhee's discussions, see Rhee, S. (1998). *Ihwajang sojang Unam Yi Süng-man munsö: 2-kwon* [The collection of Yi Süng-man documents in Ilhwajang]. Seoul, Chungang Ilbosa, pp.479-484. Cf. Harrington, F. H. (1944). *God, mammon, and the Japanese; Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American relations, 1884-1905*. Madison, Wis, The University of Wisconsin Press

⁴⁴² Rhee, S. (1998). *Ihwajang sojang Unam Yi Süng-man munsö: 2-kwon* [The collection of Yi Süng-man documents in Ilhwajang]. Seoul, Chungang Ilbosa, p.497

⁴⁴³ Rhee, S., & Kim, H.-K. (2001). *The spirit of independence: a primer for Korean modernization and democratic reform*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, pp.154-155

⁴⁴⁴ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, p.62

modern historians.⁴⁴⁵ John W. Foster, whom Rhee held in the highest esteem, rejected the pessimism of social Darwinism and insisted that American policy ought to strive towards 'giving the world a freer market, and the inhabitants of the Orient the blessings of Christian Civilization.'⁴⁴⁶ In short, international trade was to Christian mission what the Gospel was to spirit.

For Rhee trade was not something borne out of covetousness or greed but an instrument, instituted by God, to preserve each and all in this world.⁴⁴⁷ Copious references to exchange in *Spirit* are less to do with popularising the economic doctrine of *laissez-faire* than outlining a model of social nature of man repressed under Confucianism. If the theoretical underpinning of *Spirit* emphasised the natural obligations incumbent on all man, as will be shown, the aspirational manifestation of this *Spirit* was held to reside in the legal framework of *Neutrality*. From this new perspective there emerged an understanding that national independence became contingent upon the recognition and opinions of the international society, not something endogenous to the nation.⁴⁴⁸ With the trade essentially a providential mechanism that 'cannot be, will not be and ought to not be stopped', Rhee was acutely alert to the need to scale back the semantics of a national independence and political sovereignty.⁴⁴⁹ In terms of national autonomy, this imperative of 'intercourse with other states' imposed a significant qualification.⁴⁵⁰ By privileging the imperatives of international engagements, Rhee's foregrounding the theory of national independence could not but compromise the view of modern

⁴⁴⁵ See Chapter 2, *passim*

⁴⁴⁶ Devine, M. J. (1981). *John W. Foster: politics and diplomacy in the imperial era, 1873-1917*. Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, p.102

⁴⁴⁷ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chöngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Söul T'ükpyölsi, T'aep'yöngyang Ch'ulp'ansa, pp.25-26

⁴⁴⁸ See Kim, Y.-C. (2011). Yi Süng-man üi Tongnip chöngsin kwa hugi kaehwagi chöngch'i oekyo tamron [Yi Süng-man's thought on independence and the discourse of politics and diplomacy in the late enlightenment period]. In (ed) Song, P. *Chösö rül t'onghae pon Yi Süng-man üi chöngch'i sasang kwa hyönsil insik* [Yi Süng-man's political thought and contemporary perception as seen through his books]. Söul-si, Yönsë Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, pp.80-81; Rhee seems to espouse this view. See Lee, C.-S., Rhee, S., & Lee, C.-S. (2005). *Yi Süng-man üi kuhanmal kaehyök undong: küpchinjuüi esö kidokkyo ipkungnon üro* [Yi Süng-man's enlightenment activism in the late Chosön period: from political radicalism to Christian national foundation]. Taejön Kwangyöksi, Paejae Tahakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, p.107

⁴⁴⁹ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chöngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Söul T'ükpyölsi, T'aep'yöngyang Ch'ulp'ansa, p.21

⁴⁵⁰ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chöngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Söul T'ükpyölsi, T'aep'yöngyang Ch'ulp'ansa, pp.19-22

state in full control over the determination of its internal and external policy. The more he stressed the need to honour the external obligations, the more the national sovereignty had to be attenuated. In a way the pressing need to resolve the juridical status of the Chosŏn sovereignty in the international community was a foregone conclusion by 1905 when Korea became a protectorate. The most pressing intellectual task Rhee set himself upon thenceforth was grasping how the global trade regime went hand in hand with the international law.

The Spirit of the Law

By 1910 when Rhee completed his doctoral thesis at Princeton University, his political concerns were transformed around how best to accommodate and facilitate interstate trade within the body of international law. In bringing trade and law into a single unified field of analysis, Rhee's conceptualisation of neutrality is instructive and requires close scrutiny. Concerning this remarkable intellectual schema in which law and trade proved not just compatible but complementary to each other, one must take note of Rhee's ambiguous treatment of political sovereignty in relation to trade and law.

Completed in 1910 under the supervision of Edward Elliott, a southern jurist on the American constitution, *Neutrality* runs just over one hundred pages briskly outlining the historical role that the United States played on the development of neutrality.⁴⁵¹ Though narrowly confined to the genre of transatlantic diplomatic history and without a mention of Chosŏn, to what extent this was concerned with the issue of Korean independence still exhausts the scholarly debates.⁴⁵² In the

⁴⁵¹ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States: a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press (<https://archive.org/details/neutralityasinf00rheegoog>: last accessed on the Nov 11, 2014)

⁴⁵² Frequent suggestions that *Neutrality* was written with the neutrality of Chosŏn in mind are not borne out by circumstantial or textual evidences. Regarding Rhee's opinion on neutrality see *Neutrality as influenced by the United States*, p.105

following section, I will disassemble the conceptual building blocks of Rhee's overall arguments and outline the thrust of the argument.

Firstly, Rhee's historiography of neutrality is of importance. The thesis chiefly addresses the manner in which transatlantic commercial regime precipitated the development of neutrality culminating in the creation of the Geneva Arbitration Court in 1877, exactly a century after the American Revolution, and the world-historic significance it had had in the pacification of the North American continent and of the Atlantic ocean.⁴⁵³ Often indulgent to the fault in the technical details of international commerce and the particulars of maritime piracy and legal status of belligerence, *Neutrality* demonstrates the competency with which Rhee grasped the history of international law then arising across the Atlantic. What *Neutrality* seemingly lacks in concern for Korean independence it makes up with a remarkable degree of historical erudition as to why there could not have been laws concerning neutrality prior to the birth of the United States.

Closely following a learned Southern opinion, Rhee described that European thinkers such as Grotius, Bykershoek, and Wolff, enthralled by *Causa Justa* as well as the perpetual cycle of belligerence in Europe, could not in earnest entertain the discussion of 'non-enemies'.⁴⁵⁴ Physically divorced from the intensifying colonial expansion and imperial aggrandisement, according to Rhee the American

⁴⁵³ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press. 100-102.

⁴⁵⁴ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press, p.1. The southern opinion that Rhee followed was most likely that of Hannis Taylor who taught at George Washington University at that time. Rhee's quote runs as follows: 'Grotius' celebrated work, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, published in 1625, said little on the subject in the meagre chapter, *De His Qui in Bello Medii Sunt*. Compared with the present idea of neutrality, his conception was vague and imperfect. "... it is the duty of neutrals", said he, "to do nothing which may strengthen the ide which has the worse cause, or which may impede the motions of him who is carrying on a just war... and in a doubtful case to act alike to both sides, in permitting transit, in supplying provisions, in not helping persons besieged". *Neutrality as influenced by the United States: a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*, p.3. Cf. Taylor, H. (1906). The growing conception of neutrality. *The American Law Review*, v.40, p.252: 'How imperfect the conception of Grotius was is manifest from the short and unsatisfactory chapter (*De his qui in bello medii sunt*) in which he went no farther than to say that "it is the duty of those who profess neutrality in a war to do nothing towards increasing the strength of a party maintaining an unjust cause, nor impeded the measure of a power engaged in a just and righteous cause. But in doubtful cases, they ought to show themselves impartial to both sides, and to give no succor to besieged places...'; see also Taylor, H. (1915). Origin and growth of neutrality. *Georgetown Law Journal*, v.3, n.1, p.2

founders realised early on that the advancement of neutral right and neutral duty crucially depended upon the disentanglement from European powers, resulting in the Monroe doctrine. Seen in this light, the American war of independence itself was 'largely actuated by the desire for the development of the American continent without interference from the mother-country.'⁴⁵⁵

Though at times overcome by the European powers beholden to the prejudice of 'a matter of might and not of right'⁴⁵⁶ Rhee assured that the United States eventually 'contributed to a large portion of influence towards' the establishment of neutrality and international legal institution in accordance with the liberal principles.⁴⁵⁷ Therefore neutrality represented the culmination of American efforts to demarcate the lawful goods, conducts, and the sphere of enforceability so as to minimise the commercial disruption even under the most extraordinary of circumstances. Seconding John W. Foster's opinion, Rhee concluded his thesis with the assessment that America was founded to champion 'freer commerce, of a sincere and genuine neutrality, of respect for private property in war, of the most advanced ideas of *natural rights and justice*'.⁴⁵⁸

Crucial to Rhee's overall argument was that there exists a clear line connecting the birth of the United States of America and the normative legal regime emergent across the north Atlantic in line with 'the recognition of independence, the inviolability of neutral jurisdiction, and the freedom of neutral commerce'.⁴⁵⁹ Going further than merely limiting the theatre of war and compelling compensation for damages, Americans reasoned that the new international legal regime would

⁴⁵⁵ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press, p.14

⁴⁵⁶ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press, p.14

⁴⁵⁷ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press, p.111

⁴⁵⁸ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press, p.14

⁴⁵⁹ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press, p.104

gradually abolish war itself by means of competitive commerce and the arbitration tribunal governing the rules of the belligerent engagement.⁴⁶⁰

Secondly, contemporaneous with this transatlantic political developments above was the mid nineteenth-century juridical shift from the older notion of natural legalism traditionally associated with the law of nations (*ius genitum*) to which was moored the Christian assumptions, to the one that was strictly framed by positivistic and analytic design called *international law*.⁴⁶¹ At Princeton Edward Elliott's lectures on international law asserted that international law once 'rested almost entirely upon natural law' but since disinherited 'the naturalistic moral mooring'; it was, following Austin, solely dependent upon subjective and sovereign judgment by states guaranteed by the force of obligation which is self-binding.⁴⁶² Essential to the construction of the new legal regime was the innovation in statutory law, with Rhee concurring that that which has no basis on 'natural right' positive legal instruments could easily remedy.⁴⁶³ Given Rhee's earlier commitment to the idea of international law [Kr: 만국 공법; C: 萬國公法] Rhee himself recalled this bewildering discovery when he quipped that 'there was no international law' the way he anticipated it.⁴⁶⁴

Yet this positivistic turn did not completely displace the old habits of natural law regulating the normative behaviours of states and the rights and duties of individuals.⁴⁶⁵ Indeed earlier in *Spirit* there could be found a very lively presence of the Christian natural law tradition, a line perhaps extendable to Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* which declared 'that Law of Nations which is

⁴⁶⁰ See Davis, C. D. (1975). *The United States and the Second Hague Peace Conference: American diplomacy and international organization, 1899-1914*. Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, pp.16-17

⁴⁶¹ Scully, E. P. (2011). The United States and International Affairs: 1789-1919. In (eds) Grossberg, M., & Tomlins, C. *The Cambridge History of Law in America Volume 2. Volume 2*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.613; Armitage, D, et al. (2009). Round Table on Armitage, The Declaration of Independence: A Global History. *RSA Journal: Rivista di Studi Americani*, v.20, p.90; Cf. Kim, H.-C. (2005). Kaehwaki mankukkongpöp ūi chöllae wa söku küntae chukwön kukka ūi insik [The transmission of the international public law and the understanding of western modern state sovereignty]. *Chöngsin munhwa yŏn'gu*, v.28, n.1, p.132

⁴⁶² Elliott, E. (1906). International Law lecture, Princeton University Library, p.2

⁴⁶³ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press. p.65

⁴⁶⁴ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, p.113

⁴⁶⁵ Armitage, D. (2013). *Foundations of modern international thought*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.195

supposed to be found on the higher sanction of the Natural Law, (more precisely called the Law of God).⁴⁶⁶ In *Neutrality* the conceptual tensions deriving from the two distinct views of law, most transparently exposed in Rhee's assumptions on international law, was resolved often in favour of transcendental legal obligations incumbent on individual states very much same as moral imperatives upon individuals humanity. This obligation was the duty to exchange and trade. His singular stress on the state's moral duty to engage in trade unambiguously implied the subordination of all sovereignty to this supreme precept. This 'refusal to trade or open local markets for commerce' for other nations was deemed not simply 'contrary to international law' but also a mark of 'deficient sovereignty'.⁴⁶⁷

But this 'deficiency' was the international norm in Rhee's days. Those concerned with Rhee's acquiescence on western imperialism would be alarmed to discover the principle of equal access to Earth's resource as a jural ground for coercive interventionist measures. Echoing Emer de Vattel's legal theory of 'appropriation that stressed the importance of making 'improvements' to the land as a necessary condition for ownership'⁴⁶⁸, Rhee earlier proposed the similar abrogation to territorial sovereignty on the ground of equal accessibility: 'If not cultivated, it does not properly belong to that country. The land belongs to whoever cultivates first.'⁴⁶⁹ Suggesting that this was '[in] accordance with the Law of Nations' Rhee asserted that 'if the land previous occupied is not being *effectively* cultivated it could be lawfully seized and expropriated by anyone who could better exploit it'.⁴⁷⁰ Five years later, Rhee provided the concrete legal circumstances in which state sovereignty could be subject to licit abrogation by outsiders: 'when state neglects its obligations so as to place another in

⁴⁶⁶ Wheaton, H. (1836). *Elements of International Law: with a sketch of the History of the science; in two volumes Vol. 1 Vol. 1*. London, Fellowes, iv

⁴⁶⁷ Scully, E. P. (2011). The United States and International Affairs: 1789-1919. In (eds) Grossberg, M., & Tomlins, C. *The Cambridge History of Law in America Volume 2. Volume 2*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 608.

⁴⁶⁸ Keene, E. (2002). *Beyond the anarchical society: Grotius, colonialism and order in world politics*. Cambridge, Cambridge University press, 102; Tuck, R. (2001). *The rights of war and peace: political thought and the international order from Grotius to Kant*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.195

⁴⁶⁹ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chöngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Söul T'ükpyölsi, T'aep'yöngyang Ch'ulp'ansa, pp.27-28

⁴⁷⁰ Rhee, S. (1954). *Tongnip chöngsin* [The spirit of independence]. Söul T'ükpyölsi, T'aep'yöngyang Ch'ulp'ansa. P.29

a position of extreme gravity... the principle of inviolability of territory should be subordinated to the principle of self-preservation.⁴⁷¹

In the same paragraph, Rhee overruled the 'ancient law' of the nation in favour of the Law of Nations, arguing that the Law empowers any nations 'injured' by the internal disturbances to lawfully 'intervene' and obtain satisfaction. The discrepancies between the local customary law and the higher law permitted Rhee to effectively refute the formulation of state sovereignty as indivisible and inalienable. This was not unusual for as late as 1887 Sir Henry Sumner Maine regarded divisibility of sovereignty as the preeminent norm in international law for reasons to do with the British colonial ventures, a suit that the United States obediently followed.⁴⁷² State sovereignty, for Rhee, was subject to various international and legal sanctions and interventions for as long as it did not attend to its *reasonable* moral obligations.⁴⁷³ Rhee's striking emphasis on compulsory legal prerequisites by individual states desirous of full membership in (civilised) international community could be summarised by his discussions on 'due diligence', a legal precaution binding on all states in order to participate in interstate trade.⁴⁷⁴

Given the state of egregious inequity of the late-nineteenth century international order, Rhee's privileging of external obligations over and above the remit of state and national sovereignty leaves him extremely vulnerable to the charges of complicity with western imperialism.⁴⁷⁵ However, the prevailing model of international society informing Rhee's view was prejudicial by nature against

⁴⁷¹ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press, p.64

⁴⁷² Keene, E. (2002). *Beyond the anarchical society: Grotius, colonialism and order in world politics*. Cambridge, Cambridge University press, p.77

⁴⁷³ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press, p.64 (my emphasis)

⁴⁷⁴ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press, pp.99-101

⁴⁷⁵ Ironically this directly contrasts with his mentor Woodrow Wilson's principle of national self-determination a decade later at the Paris Peace Conference. See Manela, E. (2009). *The Wilsonian moment: self-determination and the international origins of anticolonial nationalism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press

state sovereignty; instead, it owed its coherence and purchase to the contemporary reality, a world still comprised of eclectic species of non-equivalent entities such as empires, federations, protectorates, suzerainties, colonies, republics, and private firms.⁴⁷⁶ Encumbering the garden variety of 'states' with the co-equal sovereign rights, as Rhee extensively documented in his thesis, might result in states pursuing policy contrary with the universal norms such as observance of neutrality, freedom of travel, and open trade.⁴⁷⁷ The 'family of nations' composed of 'independent and coequal sovereign states' subject to 'voluntary yoke of legality' was still half a century and two world wars away.⁴⁷⁸ Such a world, for Rhee, would have been as implausible and distant as when Benjamin Franklin proposed to abolish privateering altogether in the eighteenth century. The realist position with regard to existent sovereign asymmetries determined Rhee's starting point of intellectual investigation, not the reverie of normative ideals of the mid-twentieth century global order. In the meantime, the best course of preserving political independence of 'weak and small nations' was held not in the legal principle of sovereign parity in the international realm, Rhee reminded, but in the building of 'friendship and comity' between nations via trade and so forth.⁴⁷⁹ Bound by this conceptual framework, the prospects that through the promotion and maintenance of trade by the enlightened instrument of law would eventually regulate if not abolish war altogether captivated and exercised Rhee's intellect. That such a global order could now be legislated and enforced by the benign agency of the United States struck Rhee as 'a great blessing to all mankind' goes without saying.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁶ Keene, E. (2002). *Beyond the anarchical society: Grotius, colonialism and order in world politics*. Cambridge, Cambridge University press, p.61

⁴⁷⁷ This arose particularly in relations to revolutionary states then emerging in Latin America as well as central Europe. See Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press, pp.50-51 and pp.61-63

⁴⁷⁸ Taylor, H. (1902). International arbitration and the pan-American conference. *The North American Review*, v.174, n.544, p.304

⁴⁷⁹ Chu, C.-H. (1996). Chŏngnyŏn'gi Yisŭngman ŭi ŏnron chŏngch'ŭl hwal-dong haeoe hwal-tong [Young Rhee's political activism in media and in overseas]. *Yŏksa pip'yŏng*, v.5, n.1, p.180

⁴⁸⁰ Rhee, S. (1912). *Neutrality as influenced by the United States a dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Princeton [N.J.], Princeton University Press, p.111

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have given an account of Rhee's intellectual journey from his imprisonment in 1899 to the doctorate degree in 1910 during which his revolutionary radicalism transformed into something of a Christian liberal internationalism. Unlike some of his compatriots gravitating towards organic or positivistic theories of state or society, Rhee's pressing need to demolish the 'old tyranny' but uncertain as to 'what after' in anticipation of post-Chosŏn political environment spurred him to look beyond the challenges of internal social and political rearrangement for a new source of legitimacy and political virtues. Taking seriously Rhee's contention that the marriage between 'political democracy and religion' was what made the United States great, the interpretative challenge was to explain as to how and why Rhee came to identify in political Protestantism the 'ethical religion as a stimulus to duty'.⁴⁸¹ At the heart of this transformation was his changing understanding of the relationship between religion and political democracy from 1899 to 1910.⁴⁸²

Following the incarceration in 1899 Rhee channelled his intellectual energy to exploring the idea of liberty. Initially conceived of in relation to despotism, ignorance and oppression of Roman Catholicism, the spirit of liberty was held to reside in Protestantism.⁴⁸³ Pivotal to Rhee's conceptual expansion of liberty was the reflection on how the human activity of exchange may be integral to the normative structure of liberty. In *Spirit* Rhee's turn to the phenomenon of exchange and trade marked a crucial step towards the ideational extension of liberty. Brushing aside the traditional criticisms of trade as a sign of covetousness, Rhee passionately defended the regime of exchange, and made case for commercial trade as an extension of natural human desire to socialise with each other and spread the Good news.

⁴⁸¹ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, p.94

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Rhee, S., & Sŏ, C.-M. (2008). *Han'guk kyohoe p'ippak: kŏn'guk taet'ongnyŏng Yi Sŭng-man ŭi oech'im* [The persecution of Korean church: the founding president's outcry]. Seoul, Ch'ŏng Midiŏ, p.175, 178

Trade, together with the Christian mission thus represented an instance of this natural sociability. Freedom to exchange and spread the Gospel was not enumerated civic right because without it the bodily preservation and spiritual salvation of each and all cannot be guaranteed. The isolationist policy under the Chosŏn government, according to this, was tantamount to the repression and perversion of natural humanity. For Rhee any action (or inaction) that obstructs exchange with others has no place in the Godly order and invited punitive sanctions from outside. Having thus discovered the moral value of exchange, Rhee's concern shifted to the theme of law and the manner in which international trade and interstate conflicts could be legislated, which was the subject of Rhee's doctoral research in the United States following his release in 1904. Rhee's study investigated the development of neutrality in terms of the culmination of the spirit of liberty embedded in the law of nations and the United States as the Historic agency through which this enlightened spirit manifested itself. According to Rhee, the advent of the new global order in the second-half of the nineteenth century was precipitated by the foundation of the United States of America, which was Protestant in makeup and whose favoured mode of international engagement was maritime commerce rather than war, as evinced by the Monroe Doctrine in the Americas and the Open Door Policy in China.

The desire to align the post-Chosŏn polity to the new reality of international law went hand in hand with Rhee's effort to promote the compliance with international trade and commerce. Indeed any efforts for domestic reform not in concert with both international positive obligations and normative duties were liable to external sanctions. Whilst the international treaties and institutions unfortunately bore the marks of an uneven degree of enlightenment (and often codified as such), for Rhee the philosophic sentiments founded upon the Christian theological resource was unimpeachable. Grasping the relevance of the theological framework in which Rhee's searching ideas were embedded determined the outline of his political thought.⁴⁸⁴ His intellectual responses to Roman Catholicism, trade and international law were not simply a crude and self-serving ideological

⁴⁸⁴ Oliver, R. T. (1955). *Syngman Rhee, the man behind the myth*. London, R. Hale, p.62

reaction to the changing domestic and international reality but illustrative of the intellectual toolkits Rhee had at his disposal for the analysis of liberty in practical terms. With trade and international law playing the instruments to the spirit of liberal international order, the political meaning of liberty Rhee outlined bore the impression of a particular model of sociability indelibly attached to commercial considerations as well as international Christian mission enterprise. His vision of liberty, largely a product of the nineteenth-century Anglo-American liberal imagination, exemplifies the manner in which theological resources could lend conceptual coherence and intelligibility to political ideas.

But the opportunity to participate in this liberty was reduced to naught in Korea by 1905. With the looming prospect of full annexation, the Protestant converts and missionaries had to look elsewhere to find their freedom, both politically and spiritually. And when they found the source of liberty it was located not out in the world, but in the depth of human soul, inscribed in the form of the divine natural law. In search of the freedom that the politics of this world eluded, the Korean Protestants began investigating, by way of theology, the ultimate end of the soul. The resultant theological treatment of liberty, separate from political or economic treatments, has been a source of confounding ambiguity, especially given its tendency to explain human agency in terms of law and necessity, the contradiction of freedom. To this question I will turn my attention of how the Protestant conceptualisation of liberty presupposed the existence of human soul in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Soul, conscience, and liberty: politics theologised

In 1894 a member of the local Confucian gentry named Chŏng In-ho, having endured excruciating pain in his backside for years with no remedy in sight, decided to do the unthinkable: he visited a western hospital in Seoul run by an American medical missionary named William James Scranton. Despite being reported as one of the worst cases of haemorrhoids Scranton had ever seen in his long and distinguished career, Chŏng's surgery was a success. When he was eventually released from the hospital a copy of the Chinese Bible was duly handed to him. Chŏng was convinced that an elaborate stratagem to proselytise lay behind Christian acts of charity. As a result he approached the book guardedly but did not find a single offensive or erroneous word. But the public humiliation of being called a follower of Catholicism [Kr: 천주학; C: 天主學] was too great for him and 'out of shame I just could not bring myself to accept Roman Catholicism.'⁴⁸⁵

This encounter, however, was not entirely lost on him for it encouraged Chŏng to travel abroad, read broadly and study the Law of Nations. The scales of suspicion, steeled by the Confucian sensibility and alloyed by anti-Catholicism, were lifted a year later when he revisited the Bible and re-evaluated the pros and cons of the eastern and western teaching. In the end, what enabled him to overcome the public shame of being called a 'Catholic' was neither the self-evidence of superior medical technology nor a sense of personal indebtedness. Rather it was the stark contrast between the 'luminous superiority of western politics' over the eastern counterpart that persuaded him of 'the truth' of Christianity. Very much in the mould of *sola scriptura*, Chŏng described his conversion experience to the power of the Gospel and imagined the rehabilitation of God-given rights of

⁴⁸⁵ Chŏng, I.-H. (1904). Nonsŏl: Hananim ūl purugo mittulgŏt [editorial: call upon the Lord and believe]. *Sinhak Wŏlbo*, v.4, p.425

freedom and the restoration of national vigour to a 'state church founded on a *religion* [Kr: 종교; C: 宗教]'.⁴⁸⁶

His distinction between individual faith based on the Gospel and its organised structure that he called 'religion' is instructive in that it enabled him to distinguish a religion *proper* in opposition to other forms of association odious to the existing political order, such as cults. Bearing a striking similarity to the debates on how to make Confucianism into a 'religion' in Qing China in tandem with the efforts to suppress if not outlaw various 'superstitions', this modernist attempt to reform 'the Chinese religion on a Christian-based model of what a religion should be' undoubtedly informed and inspired the Korean gentry.⁴⁸⁷ The religion, insofar as it encompasses genuine natural, civil, and spiritual realms would serve as a diagnostic instrument for the true universal morality and a new historical framework predating even the earliest Confucian records. That religion constitutes the highest aspiration and repository of a given civilisation that gained wide acceptance. The prevalence of the view that European science and technology issued from their religion explains why some Koreans began to esteem the significance of religion.

Above all, it was the prospective refinement of morality by and through the vehicle of religion that energised some to rally to Protestantism.⁴⁸⁸ The most famous proponent of this position was Pak Yŏng-hyo (b.1861-1939; Kr: 박영효), the son-in-law of king Kojong and a radical progressive member of the *Kapsin* coup who prescribed a wholesale conversion to Protestantism despite himself never

⁴⁸⁶ Chŏng, I.-H. (1904). Nonsŏl: Hananim ūl purugo mittulgŏt [editorial: call upon the Lord and believe]. *Sinhak Wŏlbo*, v.4, p.426 (my emphasis)

⁴⁸⁷ For the discussion on the Chinese anti-superstition campaign in the late nineteenth century see Goosseart, V. (2006). 1898: The Beginning of the End for Chinese Religion? *The Journal of Asian Studies*, v. 65, pp.307-335; Jansen, T., Klein, T., & Meyer, C. (2014). *Globalization and the making of religious modernity in China transnational religions, local agents, and the study of religion, 1800-present*, Chapter 1; Chen, H.-Y. (1999). *Confucianism encounters religion: the formation of religious discourse and the Confucian movement in modern China*. PhD diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; Wu, A. M. (2016). *From Christ to Confucius: German missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the globalization of Christianity, 1860-1950*, pp.73-74

⁴⁸⁸ See Mun, C.-Y. (2010). *Sŏgu munhwa waŭi mannām* [The contacts with the western culture]. Sŏul-si, Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, p.213; Pak, M.-S. (1996). Hanmal minjok chuŭijadŭl ūi chonggyo ihae: <Taehan Meil Sinbo> (1904-1910) ūi nonsŏl ūl chungsim ūro [The understandings of religion by the nationalists in late Taehan Empire period: centring on the editorials of <Taehan Meil Sinbo> (1904-1910)]. *Han'guk Kiddokkyo wa yŏksa = Christianity and History in Korea*, v.9, n.1, pp.13-17

converting to Protestantism.⁴⁸⁹ Similarly Pak Ŭn-sik, the nationalist historian of *Han'guk T'ongsa* (1915; Kr: 한국 통사; C: 韓國通史), famously called for 'the establishment of religion' (Kr: 국교; C: 國教)

that would foreground the reformation of national politics, economics, law, and culture.⁴⁹⁰

Underpinning this influential idea in the 1910s was the belief that prioritises religious knowledge enshrined in the institution of religion as the fundamental moral ordering of human life. Again, a similar precedence for the religious establishment in Qing China by the likes of Kang Youwei, one of the most significant reformers at the turn of twentieth century in Qing China, found echos in the Taehan Empire period in which the need to reform the prevailing political morality was urgently felt.⁴⁹¹

Secondly, it helped construe plausible reasons as to why the Confucian epistemic system had exhausted itself at that particular historical juncture. From his public confession one could trace the rough contour of the intellectual appeal Christianity had exercised over the learned class. Well aware of the distinction between technical and moral knowledge, the Chosŏn intellectuals in the 1890s were far more circumspect about conflating a surgical competence to remove haemorrhoids with a novel standard for moral rectitude capable of uplifting the dismal state of Korean nation. In contrast, scholars of Korean history have been quick to conclude that 'hospitals, schools, and churches built by Protestant missionaries were... crucial apparatuses for the work of imperial cultural hegemony' and the 'healing or teaching... [acted as] a kind of bait.'⁴⁹² We are assured that it was on the basis of civilisational progress that liberal interventionism, Christian humanitarianism, and

⁴⁸⁹ Mun, C.-Y. (2010). *Sŏgu munhwa waŭi mannang* [The contacts with the western culture]. Sŏul-si, Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, pp.211-212

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid, p.14

⁴⁹¹ Wu, A. M. (2016). *From Christ to Confucius: German missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the globalization of Christianity, 1860-1950*, p.74; on Kang Youwei, see Chen, H.-Y. (1999). *Confucianism encounters religion: the formation of religious discourse and the Confucian movement in modern China*. PhD diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, MA., Chapter 2; Goosseart, V. (2006). 1898: The Beginning of the End for Chinese Religion? *The Journal of Asian Studies*, v. 65, p.313

⁴⁹² Kim, Y. (1999). Protestant Missions as Cultural Imperialism in Early Modern Korea. *Korea Journal*, v.39, n.4, p.209

imperialistic expansionism were justified – the so-called ‘the White Man’s Burden’.⁴⁹³ The fact that the likes of Jaisohn’s condescending cant that switching from rice to ‘breads’ as new dietary staples would facilitate reforming Chosŏn is duly cited to illustrate the ideological crudity underpinning this discourse.⁴⁹⁴ The force of western cultural hegemonic episteme, argue many, was apparently such that even Koreans ‘soon began to reproduce the same critical discourses for themselves.’ Even those sympathetic to the spread of Protestantism in Korea concede in embarrassment that ‘Protestantism was a religion of civilization’.⁴⁹⁵

This line of criticism attacks the religionists’ misplaced faith that Protestantism would deliver the same level of civilization as the great Western nations. It argues that religionists are guilty of not only the intellectual naivety of conflating religion with secular rationalities but also unwittingly subscribing to the imperialistic apologia of ‘the theories of the survival of the fittest’ in which Protestant religion occupied the highest evolutionary position.⁴⁹⁶ Therefore the civilisation discourse in which Protestant religion played a significant role committed a double moral *coup*: implanting a false consciousness as well as intellectual pretension with regard to the power of religion more appropriately belonging to state, party, market, society, or some such. The whole point of the civilisation discursive exercise was to render this epistemic fraudulence convincing and seamless.

⁴⁹³ The term originates from The ‘White Man’s Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands’, a poem by Rudyard Kipling composed in 1899 in the wake of the Spanish-American War. See Murphy, G. (2010). *Shadowing the White Man’s Burden: U.S. Imperialism and the problem of the color line*. New York: New York University Press

⁴⁹⁴ *Tongnip Sinmun*. (1896). Nonsŏl [editorial], October 10

⁴⁹⁵ Jang, S.-M. (1999). Protestantism in the name of modern civilization. *Korea Journal*, v.39, n.4, p.193; for the religious imperialism in this period in Korea, see Kim, Y.-S. (1998). Kaesin’gyo sŏn’gyo wa munhwa chaegukjuŭi: munhwajok hegemoni wa ie taehan taeŭng [The Protestant mission and cultural imperialism: cultural hegemony and the responses]. *Hyŏnsang kwa insik*, v.2, n.74, pp.31-59; Pak, H.-N. (2010). Singminjijŏk Kundaesŏng kwa kaesin’gyo [Colonial modernity and Protestantism]. *Chonggyo wa sahoe*, v.2, n.10, pp.7-43; Sŏ, C.-M. (1996). Kundae Asia esŏŭi sŏn’gyosa munjae: han’guk kwa ilbon kaesin’gyodul ŭi hwaldong e taehan kŏmt’o rŭl chungsim ŭro [The missionary problem in modern Asia: centring on the activities of Protestant missionaries in Korea and Japan]. *Han’guk Kiddogyo wa yŏksa*, v.5, n.9, pp.208-240; Yi, C.-K. (2002). Han’guk Kasin’gyo wa sŏn’gyo chaegukjuŭi [Korean Protestantism and missionary imperialism]. *Sahoe Pip’yŏng*, v.9, n.1, pp.178-192

⁴⁹⁶ Jang, S.-M. (1999). Protestantism in the name of modern civilization, *Korea Journal*, v.39, n.4, p.193

Against this onslaught, one also recalls that contemporary Chosŏn intellectuals' resistance to western civilisation discourse redoubled their own Sinocentric vision of civilisational superiority by narrowly stressing the technical instrumentality of western knowledge with no concession to local morality and social order.⁴⁹⁷ Korean historians stress the rhetoric 'the eastern path, western means' (Kr: 동도서기; C: 東道西器) as an emblematic attitude of the governing class confident of selective appropriation of western *techne* without compromising Confucian morality.⁴⁹⁸ In this line of thought, the question as to how and why some Korean reformist intellectuals were riveted by religion at all does not register, except as part of the general atmosphere of national desperation and intellectual crisis. We are left to ponder the extent to which religion managed to distract Koreans from pursuing more serious rationalistic reforms *à la* the Meiji state modernisation.⁴⁹⁹

The undue emphasis on all things modern need not distract us from the fact that at that time in Chosŏn Christians and non-Christians alike identified a need for something new with which to reconstitute the body politic and moral fabric. In order to carry out a drastic wholesale reform of public morality and politics, some felt a form of knowledge distinct from the received learning was indispensable.⁵⁰⁰ Pivotal to the conversion experience amongst the learned class seemed to have been the discovery of the *moral* superiority of the west. This is in contrast to the conventional historiography that takes for granted the role of the scientific and technological supremacy of western missionaries by which the hapless natives were enthralled. Whilst Ch'ŏng's public confession seemingly crystallised the self-serving account of civilisation discourse as a personal

⁴⁹⁷ For a late Chosŏn resurgence of Sinocentrism, see Kim, Y.-M. (2013). Chosŏn chunghwajuŭi ŭi chaekömt'o: ironchök chöpkün [Review of the Chosŏn sinocentrism: re-evaluating its theoretics]. *Han'guksa yŏn'gu*, n.162, pp.211-252

⁴⁹⁸ See Chang, Y.-S. (2003). Tongdosögi ron ŭi yŏn'gu tonghyang kwa kwache [the current fashions and the task of tongdosögi discourse]. *Yŏksa wa hyönsil*, v.50, pp.517-544; Chang, Y.-S. (2006). Tongdosögi ron ŭi chöngch'ijök yökhal kwa pyönhwa [the political role of tongdosögi discourse and its transformation]. *Yŏksa wa hyönsil*, v.60, pp.345-374; Pak, C.-S. (2006). Sinkisŏn ŭi yuhak kyöngwi ŭl t'onghae pon tongdosögi ron ŭi sasangchök t'ükching [The ideational characteristics of 'tongdosögi' as seen through the motive of Sin Ki-sŏn's study abroad]. *Yŏksa wa hyönsil*, v.60, pp.315-343; Chang, K.-S. (2006). Kaehanghu miguk sahaeng kwa söku suyong ŭi ch'ui [The Korean envoys to America and the mode of reception]. *Chungang saron*, v.24, p.87

⁴⁹⁹ Deuchler, M. (1977). *Confucian gentlemen and barbarian envoys: the opening of Korea, 1875-1885*. Seattle, University of Washington Press, pp.51-230

⁵⁰⁰ See the same rationale for Tonghak's institutionalisation into Ch'öndokyo. See Ch'oe, K.-Y. (2003). *Han'guk kŭndae kyemong sasang yŏn'gu* [Korean modern enlightenment thought]. Söul-si, Ilchogak, p.237

motive for conversion, this episode also indicates the high moral premium on this new mode of thought we now call 'religion' on par with medicine or railway. Just as scientific ignorance brought about the Koreans' failure to make use of the natural resource, Rhee explained, the unfamiliarity with the knowledge of 'demonology and anthropology' [Kr: 귀신학 과 인류학] placed the Korean people under the Satanic yoke.⁵⁰¹

The ideational assaults against Confucianism were mounted not along the 'modernisation' or 'modernity' axis; rather, the starting point was that Confucianism was a bankrupt system of public morality, a view echoed by the radical reformers such as Pak Yŏng-hyo who famously argued that what Korea needed most was 'education and Christianity'.⁵⁰² This bankruptcy, the Protestants reasoned, occurred because Confucianism was corrupt *and* irreligious; that without the full knowledge of the Genesis, the Final Judgement and the existence of Grace, human laws were deficient and, more importantly, corruptible over time. Lacking access to the revealed knowledge, Protestant missionaries charged, Confucianism was but a perpetual cycle of history without *Progress*.⁵⁰³ Breaking this cycle of corruption takes a religion *proper* in possession of inherent political virtues and moral truth. To a modern secular ear a suggestion that religion, an evangelical one at that, is a necessary precondition for a well-ordered society is objectionable. To late nineteenth century American Protestant missionaries, the distinction between medicine and religion would have been contrived.⁵⁰⁴ The American Protestant missionaries considered the Christian religion to command the ultimate epistemic authority of all human, natural and supernatural knowledge.⁵⁰⁵ The suggestion that Christian religion would 'cleanse body, stabilise society, reform ancient customs, and provide the new moral foundation for politics' would have been *tout court*

⁵⁰¹ *Cheguk Sinmun*. (1902). Kungmin i hamkke ch'imik hamyŏ kanŭn kŭnin [Reasons for accompanying the nation for overall benefits], September 4

⁵⁰² Mun, C.-Y. (2010). *Sŏgu munhwa waŭi mannam*. Sŏul-si, Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, pp.211-12

⁵⁰³ See Martin, W. A. P. (1896). *A cycle of Cathay; or, China, south and north. With personal reminiscences*. New York, F.H. Revell Co.

⁵⁰⁴ Preston, A. (2012). The Spirit of Democracy: Religious Liberty and American Anti-Communism during the Cold War. In (eds) Isaac, J., & Bell, D. *Uncertain Empire: American History and the Idea of the Cold War*. New York, Oxford University Press, p.145

⁵⁰⁵ Hedstrom, M. S. (2015). The evangelical mind in a secular age. *Modern Intellectual History*, v.6, p.1

self-evident.⁵⁰⁶ This was what undoubtedly prompted the Confucianists to petition the government to have Confucianism acknowledged as a 'religion' from its earlier notion of an 'orthodox learning'.⁵⁰⁷

The suggestion that Christianity would furnish the moral foundation deficient in Confucian politics had gradually flooded into other domains of intellectual inquiry such as history, morality, and politics throughout the 1900s and 1910s. Following this intellectual deluge was the dramatic re-evaluation of the *Korean* past and its cultural heritage in virtue of this new knowledge. This re-evaluation drew fierce dissents from the Confucian camp. The most pressing question was how to inaugurate the new moral politics, an aim that hinged on the possibility of demonstrating the epistemic relevance of Christianity in Korean history. As such, the most significant intellectual and ideological battles in this period stemmed from the new conceptualisation of history and morality, not along the religion vs. secular or pre-modern vs. modern axis. It is to these intellectual implications elaborated along the axis of religion and morality that I turn my attention next. But first a quick sketch of political context is in order.

Corruption or religion

With the prospect of direct political action by young radicals firmly behind them by late 1899, the American missionaries faced the daunting task of de-pressurising the political tension in order to mollify the incumbent authority. The burning amber of the revolutionary ideology had to be extinguished, and in its place cool theological reflections, insulated from the immediacy of

⁵⁰⁶ *T'aehan K'ŭrisŭtoin Hoebo*. (1899). Tapchyang p'yŏnchi [Letter of reply], March 29, p.72

⁵⁰⁷ See http://sillok.history.go.kr/url.jsp?id=kza_13604027_002; http://sillok.history.go.kr/url.jsp?id=kza_13206010_001; see also Kŭm, C.-T. (2009). *Kwisin Kwa Chesa: Yugyo Ŭi Chonggyojŏk Segye*. [Ghosts and ancestral rituals: Confucianism's religious world]. Sŏul-si, Chei aen Ssi; Kŭm, C.-T. (2003). *Chosŏn Hugi Yugyo Wa Sŏhak: Kyoryu Wa Kaltŭng*. [The Confucianism and western learning in late Chosŏn: transmission and conflicts]. Sŏul, Sŏul Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu

contemporary politics, had to be injected without scattering the flocks to other movements, such as *Tonghak* or even Russian Orthodox.⁵⁰⁸

An influential interpretation by Min Kyung-bae has suggested that the concerted efforts by American missionaries to 'de-politicise' the church at this point was largely inspired by American views of separationism between church and state in keeping with Japan's wish. This in turn gave rise to the eruption of religious revivalism which swept the northern half of Korea in 1907.⁵⁰⁹ According to this account the tremendous emotional outpouring at the religious revival meetings in P'yŏngyang in 1907 on the eve of the Japanese annexation underscores the extent to which the Protestant church in Korea was thought to be a bastion of the Korean nation despite the American efforts. For Min this very public event signalled the beginning of the voluntary withdrawal of the church from the public sphere and marked the transformative shift by the infant Protestant community to consolidate into a seedbed for 'moral society' destined to reform future Korean groupings. At the same time, we are told, this withdrawal was entirely tactical insofar as it eventually led to 'nationalising' the Korean Protestant church. According to this view the Korean evangelical enterprise strategically altered its main focus from the domain of *state* to strata of *nation* in the time of unprecedented national catastrophe. The top-down push for 'de-politicisation', we are told, gave rise to the anti-intellectual tendency such as premillennial evangelicalism, spiritualistic emotivism, and soteriological indulgence, as well as church nationalism.⁵¹⁰

This explanation, however, fails to take notice of the shifting conceptual ground. The anti-intellectual framework proposed in the de-politicisation/anti-intellectual thesis does not square with the

⁵⁰⁸ *T'aehan K'ŭrisŭtoin Hoebo*. (1900). *Alsu upnŭn il* [an incomprehensible affair], April 11, p.365

⁵⁰⁹ Min, K. (2007). *Han'guk Kidok kyohoesa: Han'guk minjok kyohoe hyŏngsŏng kwajŏngsa* [Korean Christian history: the history of Korean minjok church formation]. Sŏul-si, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, p.299

⁵¹⁰ Oak, S. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876-1915*. Waco: Baylor University Press, p.8; see also Lee, T.-C. (2008). 1908nyŏn manchu puhŭng untong e kwanhan yŏnku [A study on the Christian revivalism in Manchuria in 1908]. *Han'guk kidokkyo wa yŏksa*, n.28, pp.123-161; Kim, I.-H. (2007). 1907nyŏn p'yŏngyang taepuhŭng kwa tangsi sŏngkyŏng kongbu ŭi hyŏntaechŏk ŭimi [The P'yŏngyang Great Revival in 1907 and the modern meaning of contemporary bible studies]. *Pokŭm kwa sinhak*, v.9, pp.22-38; Sŏ, C.-M. (2007). Han'guk kyohoe ch'oki taepuhŭng undong e taehan sahoechŏk panŭng: sinmun, chapchi ŭi panŭng ŭl chungsim ŭro [The contemporary social reactions to the Great Revival: with the focus on the newspapers and magazines]. *Hankukkitokkyo wa yŏksa*, v.26, pp.81-113

concurrent efforts by the Anglo-American missionaries to shore up theological debates and contest the Confucian epistemological foundation. Broadly put, if in the 1880s and 1890s the fight was broadly over how to distinguish religion from something like esoteric conspiracy, popular superstitions or priestcraft, by the early 1900s the chief task turned to substantiating – theoretically, textually, or practically – the historical accuracy, moral relevance and cognitive plausibility of this new universal knowledge enshrined in the institution called ‘religion’. In contrast, many Confucian scholars maintained that the metaphysics of tao [Kr: 도; C: 道] was something to which only Confucian learning could do a full epistemic justice whilst the *religions* of Buddha and Christ were comprised of unsatisfactory lessons already contained in the Chinese canonical writings. As Yi Kyujun [b.1855-1923; 李奎峻], an influential late Chosŏn Confucian author of *Sŏkgok simsŏ* (1922; C: 石谷心書) remarked, the moral lessons by the religious founders such as Christ and Buddha had been already bested by the teachings of Confucius.⁵¹¹

Many Protestant converts, well versed in the Confucian canons, pointed out the discrepancies between the localised Confucian historical episteme and the Christian universality in order to rationalise their conversion experiences. But as this knowledge became more known and the extent of the Christian universality was made apparent, the disquieting implications went beyond the bound of idle speculative reasoning. In particular, the more the self-evident nature of Christianity was stressed the more pressing the explanation for its historical absence in Korea became. If the cognitive capacity for moral reasoning and judgment had been universal and self-evident to the extent that even those thought to be below the ladder of civilisation in Africa could grasp it, then why had this ‘universal knowledge’ been unavailable to Koreans for nearly two millennia? There was anxious incomprehension over this question, and, no coherent answer was immediately forthcoming

⁵¹¹ Yi, K.-J. (2009). *Kugyŏk sŏkgok, sŏkgok simsŏ, p’osang kimun*. Taejon: Han’gukhak ūihak yŏn’guso, p.40

from the Protestant quarter.⁵¹² Worse yet, the catechist pamphlets from China on which the missionaries largely depended was found wanting and the Bible was not yet fully available in vernacular Korean.⁵¹³ As a result, the religious instructions resulted in confusion, not least because foreign missionaries' foregrounding of the Christian universal knowledge inadvertently eroding away Confucian universalism and along with it the known historical coordinates in the received historiography in Korea. Feeling the pinch, Jaisohn placed blame on the seclusion policy of Chosŏn government whilst others alluded to the Roman Catholic monopoly of keeping the Gospel hidden from the laity.⁵¹⁴

The educated converts were especially resistant to the wholesale condemnation and countered that Confucianism was nonetheless 'a boon to the popular morality *a long time ago*'.⁵¹⁵ The implication this had on the spiritual welfare of the Korean ancestors was not lost on anyone. The blank pronouncement by the Protestant missionaries that 'divine judgment following death' had been known to everyone in the civilised parts of the world and that the Christian god communicates his reason clear and intelligible to us 'regardless of one's access to the New Testament' did not alleviate the foreboding.⁵¹⁶ On a more visceral level, the appalling insistence by some Protestant missionaries that no posthumous interventions, *pace* Roman Catholic intercessions, could overturn the eternity of hellfire to which the entirety of Korean ancestors were condemned could hardly have been heartening.

In a more conciliatory mood Protestant intellectuals characterised Confucianism partially consistent with the Mosaic Law (Kr: 율법; C: 律法), giving rise to questions as to what extent Oriental sages such

⁵¹² The New Testament was available in Korean until 1904 and the Old Testament only in 1911. See Taehan Sŏngsŏ Konghoe. (1993). *Taehan Sŏngsŏ Konghoe* [The history of the Korean Bible Council]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Taehan Sŏngsŏ Konghoe

⁵¹³ See Paejae Haktang. (1895). *Myoch'yuk mundap*. Kyŏngsŏng, Paejae Haktang; on the catechist literature from China, see Oak, S. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876-1915*. Waco: Baylor University Press, Chapter 5

⁵¹⁴ See Chapter 4 *passim*

⁵¹⁵ *Taehan K'ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1900). Pangkwan hanŭn sarahm ŭi p'yŏngron [A thought by a person sitting idly by], Mar 21, p.349

⁵¹⁶ *Taehan K'ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1899). Chukimundap [Questions and answers regarding God], June 22, p.150

as Confucius, Mencius or Laozi transmitted the divine positive law to China and Korea.⁵¹⁷ Some, most notably James Legge in China, controversially sought to present Confucianism as a forerunner of Christianity very much the same way the Jesuits did two centuries ago, whilst others like Horace G. Underwood in Korea roundly rejected such hypotheses.⁵¹⁸ Once this *parochialisation* had become the departure point for intellectual investigations, many American missionaries issued magnanimous reappraisal of *some* features of Confucianism like filial duty, educational zeal, and deference to existent authority. Yet, crippled by the absence of reference to Genesis in the Scripture, ancient Chinese sages did their best to construct a system of this-worldly ethics that omitted recourse to the divine creation. This 'idolatrous practice' was itself somewhat contrary to Confucius' own explicit diffidence with regard to supernatural: 'whilst you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?'⁵¹⁹ Against the ancient proscription, men began to worship themselves as their own creator, most emblematic of which was the worship of human ancestors.⁵²⁰

Under the conciliarist attitude various opinions with respect to Confucianism gradually settle around two premises: firstly, Confucianism is not a religion but a system of irreligious, this-worldly ethics⁵²¹; secondly, it is deficient of some key historical information crucial for building a firm normative

⁵¹⁷ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1904). Sangri moksasŏ, v.4, n.1, p.477

⁵¹⁸ Oak, S.-D. (2012). Competing Chinese Names for God: The Chinese Term Question and Its Influence upon Korea. *Journal of Korean Religions*, v.3, pp.89-115; Oak, S.-D. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876 - 1915*. Waco, Baylor University Press, Chapter 1; Söl, C.-S. (2012). Cheimsŭ legŭ wa horeisŭ G. ōntōutŭ ūi sinkwan pikyo yŏn'gu [James Legge and Horace G. Underwood's understanding of God]. *Changsin nondan*, v.44, n.1, pp.107-130; Söl, C.-S. (2012). Cheimsŭ lekŭ ūi pikyo chongkyo yŏn'gu esŏ tŭrŏnan yukyo ilsinron koch'al [James Legge's comparative religious studies and his theory of Confucian monotheism]. *Han'guk kidokkyo wa yŏksa*, v.36, pp.269-293; for a detailed treatment of Legge's general scholarly oeuvre, see Girardot, N. J. (2002). *The Victorian translation of China: James Legge's Oriental pilgrimage*. Berkeley, University of California; for the Jesuit controversy in China see Minamiki, G. (1985). *The Chinese rites controversy: from its beginning to modern times*. Chicago, Loyola University Press; Lackner, M. (1991). Jesuit figurism, pp.129-149. In (ed) Lee, T. H. C. *China and Europe: images and influences in sixteenth to eighteenth centuries*. Hong Kong, The Chinese University Press

⁵¹⁹ Gifford, D. L. (1898). *Every-day life in Korea; a collection of studies and stories*. Chicago, Fleming H. Revell Co., p.90

⁵²⁰ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1904). Usang ūl pehalgŏt [Abolishing idolatry], v.4, n.6, p.143

⁵²¹ Kim, H.-S. (2003). 19segi mal~20segi ch'o sŏyang sŏn'gyosadŭl ūi han'guk chonggyo ihae [Late 19th century and early 20th century western missionaries' understanding of the Korean religions]. *Han'guk kiddokkyo wa yŏksa*, v.19, n.8, pp.24-27; Yi, C.-K. (1995). Kundae han'guk kasin'gyo ūi t'achonggyo ihae [Modern Korean Protestantism's understanding of other religions]. *Han'guk kiddokkyo wa yŏksa*, v.4, n.12, pp.131-160; Chang, S.-M. (1999). 'Kundae munmyŏng' iranŭn irum ūi kaesin'gyo [Protestantism in the name of 'modern civilization']. *Yŏksa pip'yŏng*, n.46, pp.262-264

foundation.⁵²² The underlying suggestion that Confucianism was not so much in the wrong as merely a temporary precursor, whose moral reserve was complete depleted became widely accepted.⁵²³ Issuing from the two premises, one concluded that Confucianism had become obsolete. Worse yet, monarchical absolutism, official oppression and idolatrous superstitions naturally arising from this became entrenched over time. But now that the true and reformed form of Christianity was available, Confucian scholars were urged to abandon the decaying system of thought and embrace the true knowledge. Hence the epistemic quandary between Confucian and Protestant minds erupted most forcefully along the axis of history. For them, the entire history of Korea (and not simply its latest dynasty) was marked by corruption and degeneration of true morality since antiquity. This point, already articulated by Liang Quichao [b.1873-1929] in his *Zhongguo hun* (C: 中國魂), tacked blame on the downfall of the Chinese civilisation to Qin Shi Huang in the third century BCE.⁵²⁴

According to one Epwŏt Young Men's League member, the moral and political decay that had grown in the intervening years between the Flood and the contemporary Chosŏn deprived Koreans of the 'true knowledge of God, the country, and the liberty'.⁵²⁵ Contending that Protestantism was the only viable future for Korea, Rhee Syngman likened those insisting on Confucianism to '[dressing] oneself in clothes, illuminous in antiquity but worn out and shabby now' and 'silly men trying to fit into child's clothes'.⁵²⁶ Indeed, prior to the spread of the Bible and the reformed religion 'the west was no less in the dark than those in the East,' suggesting that advancement of civilisation to be

⁵²² For instance Rhee wrote that 'four thousand years ago the flood wiped out the mankind but Noah survived and taught the subsequent generations how to govern [...] Christianity was born in Asia but spread to Europe'. Rhee, S. (1902). Munmyŏng ŭi saeryŏk [the forces of civilisation]. *Chaeguk Sinmun*, August 21

⁵²³ Oak, S.-D. (2001). Ch'oki han'guk kyohoe ŭi tankun sinhwa ihae [Early Korean Christian's understanding of Tan'gun mythology]. In (ed) Yi, M.-Y. *Han'guk Kidokkyo wa minjok t'ongil undong: Han'guk Kidokkyosa yŏn'gu*. Sŏul, Han'guk Kidokkyo Yŏksa Yŏn'guso, pp.296-297

⁵²⁴ Yi, K.-J. (2009). *Kugyŏk sŏkgok, sŏkgok simsŏ, p'osang kimun*. Taejon: Han'gukhak ŭihak yŏn'guso, pp.84-5; for Liang Quichao see Liang, Q. (1913). *Zhongguo hun*. Shanghai, Guang zhi shu ju

⁵²⁵ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1904). Kunsori ro purŏ [Yelling at the top of the lung], v.4, n.9, p.294

⁵²⁶ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1903). Yesukyo ka taehan changrae ŭi kicho [Protestantism is the future foundation of Taehan], v.3, n.8, p.240

relatively fluid and subject to change.⁵²⁷ In this line of thought the West lost its civilizational fix-point so that it could take on a more fluid meaning no longer at odds with the East. Thus, the present backwardness was 'a historically necessary outcome that will naturally be ameliorated with the gradual extinction of Confucianism... now that people are able to intercourse freely and distinguish men from objects'.⁵²⁸ Following this the Korean converts posited that the enlightenment of the West owed itself to reformed Christianity whilst the corrupting influences of Confucianism had rendered people irreconcilably savage to each other in Korea.⁵²⁹

Further, the alleged positive contributions by Confucianism on the moral sphere of culture and family were outstripped by the entrenched iniquity inherent in Confucianism. The Confucian culture of apotheosising ancestors and monarchs naturalised permanent stratification of human society. This was particularly true in the terms in which familial and gender relations were expressed, with the critics charging that marriage was instituted purely for 'supporting one span of the family line from father to son', serving the function of the 'bridge connecting the ages'.⁵³⁰ Yun Ch'i-ho was at his most damning in his self-confession in 1898 when he labelled Confucianism in Korea 'a system of ethics yielding the fruit of agnosticism, selfishness, arrogance, despotism, degradation of woman... If other countries can make a better use of it, Korea is, or ought to be, willing enough to part with it – the sooner, the better.'⁵³¹

Under these 'misguided efforts for moral reform lasting a few hundred years' Koreans had been deprived not only of fundamental freedoms but, more alarmingly, the capacity for human emotions.⁵³² With the family – arguably most basic unit of human sociability – reduced to its purely biological reproductive instrumentality under the Confucian regime, the American missionaries

⁵²⁷ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1904). Sŏngkyŏng [The Bible], v.4, n.4, p.59

⁵²⁸ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1904). Kyo nŭn chŏngch'i ŭi kŭnpon [religion is the foundation of politics], v.4, n.5, p.110

⁵²⁹ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1904). Yesu ŭi kusokhasim ŭl sarami ponbattulgot [The redemption by Jesus must be followed], v.4, n.2, p.551

⁵³⁰ Gale, J. S. (1898). *Korean sketches*. New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, p.175

⁵³¹ Yun, C.-H. (1895). Confucianism in Korea. *The Korean Repository*, v.2, n.11, p.404

⁵³² *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1904). Chinli rŭl achi mottamyŏn kyohwa ka hŭngwangch'i mottam [If truth is unknown, the edification cannot follow], v.4, n.8, p.250

argued that genuine human emotions in Korea thoroughly desiccated so much so that '[unselfish] love is a quantity foreign to the Oriental mind'.⁵³³ This was a most astounding observation, for, according to the missionaries, there was no more telling a reason to explain the barbarism of Confucianism that effectively dissolved some of the most basic human bonds. Encountering a man feigning a cry on the road, a Canadian missionary named James Scarth Gale enquired as to why the man was distraught if he had no love for his departed wife: 'But she made my clothes and cooked my food – how can I live without her? Aigo! Aigo!'⁵³⁴

If Protestant Christianity were to reform politics, take flight from corrupting history, and restore humanity to Koreans lost to the ages of Confucianism, many considered a systematic and scientific investigation and education of the soul absolutely indispensable in understanding the Korean psyche and spirituality. The consensus amongst the Protestant missionaries that centuries of Confucianism had debilitated the inner workings of the soul and severed the soul from human emotive outlets gripped the theological imagination for decades.⁵³⁵ One of the responses was trying to re-connect the human soul onto the instrument of the body and establish a 'sensory-mechanical' linkage. The flurry of Anglo-Americans missionaries' scholarly commentaries on the nature of the soul, mind and spirit that drew connections between inner spiritual discernment, intuiting the divine positive law, and man's inherent moral agency at the turn of the twentieth century is reflective of this scholarly endeavour. The robust scientific account to the soul, the phenomenology of the soul, running parallel to the theological and metaphysical explanation was the definitive feature of this period.

The science of the soul

For what can be known about God is perfectly plain to them, since God has made it plain to them

Romans 1.19

⁵³³ Gale, J. S. (1898). *Korean sketches*. New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, pp.174-175

⁵³⁴ Gale, J. S. (1898). *Korean sketches*. New York, Fleming H. Revell Company. Pp.175-176

⁵³⁵

Once the extent of the bewildering perplexity regarding the human soul in Korea became known due to early ethnographic works by missionaries, the need to disseminate the *accurate* view of the soul to Koreans was urgently felt across the board. The missionaries held that in Korea was in existence not only 'a belief in a multiplicity of spirits and demons'⁵³⁶ densely populating the land, but also that 'each human being is supposed to possess two souls, one a male soul (Kr: 혼; C: 魂), and one a female (Kr: 백; C: 魄)' whereby upon death 'the male soul goes to heaven and the female to hell, while the body sleeps in the ancestral grave.'⁵³⁷ Another missionary reported that a Korean man confessed to having 'three souls, and upon death one goes to hades, or wanders about on the earth, one goes to the grave, and one takes his abode in the ancestral tablet.'⁵³⁸ The same author described how Koreans periodically made offerings of food for the second soul at the burial sites and offered sacrifices to the third soul in the wooden tablet.⁵³⁹ Further to the idea of multiplicity of souls, many Koreans also believed that the soul was subject to decrepitude and death similar to physical body, and that ancestral souls required regular sustenance just like any living beings.⁵⁴⁰ Some Koreans confided that 'soul does not go to the realm of departed spirits, but wanders about on this earth dependent for its condition upon the fidelity of his sons in keeping up the prescribed sacrifice'.⁵⁴¹

Although foreigners found it easy 'to ridicule the superstitions of the Koreans', the baffling creed of multiplicity of souls per person registered sufficient intellectual apprehension enough to warrant the

⁵³⁶ Gimore, G. (1894). *Corea of to-day*. New York, T. Nelson and Sons, p.93

⁵³⁷ Gale, J. S. (1909). *Korea in transition*. New York, Young people's missionary movement of the United States and Canada, p.72

⁵³⁸ Gifford, D. L. (1898). *Every-day life in Korea: A collection of studies and stories*. Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., p.90

⁵³⁹ Gifford, D. (1892). Ancestral worship as practiced in Korea. *The Korean Repository*, v. 1, p.169

⁵⁴⁰ Genso, J. F. (1909). Sacrificial Foods. *Korean Mission Field*, v.9, p.159; *Sinhak Wölbo*. (1901). Mansa mundap [answers to all questions], v.1, n.11, p.455; *Sinhak Wölbo*. (1902). Puhwal tori [the reason of resurrection], v.2 n.3, p.8

⁵⁴¹ Gifford, D. L. (1898). *Every-day life in Korea; a collection of studies and stories*. Chicago, Fleming H. Revell Co., p.89

assault of full-scale Christian systematic theology.⁵⁴² The dismissive attitude soon gave way once the missionaries realised that Koreans really *did* possess sincere and genuine conviction with regard to inanimate objects or ancestral spirits. The overall strategy gradually changed from enumerating a list of logical inconsistencies in native practices to a full engagement in a pitched epistemic battle.⁵⁴³ The main line of battle between Protestant missionaries and local intellectuals was drawn over the (im)materiality of the soul: the Christians asserted the immaterial perpetuity of body *and* soul that survives the physical death and the locals maintained its elemental physicality.⁵⁴⁴

The simmering disagreement entered a new phase in the early 1900s. In July 1902 the serialised exposition on the nature of ‘soul’ by William A. Noble, an American Methodist-Episcopal missionary based in P’yŏngyang, appeared in the first volume of *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. Entitled ‘Ryŏnghonron’ (Kr: 령혼론; C: 靈魂論) or in English ‘A Primer of Psychology’, the series was prefaced with the assertion that, unlike ‘philosophy’ (Kr: 리학; c: 理學), the study of the soul – used interchangeably with the word ‘mind’ (Kr: 마음) or ‘spirit’ (Kr: 혼백; c: 魂魄) in this period – was a ‘science’ (Kr: 과학; c: 科學) premised on ‘the mental cognition of facts’. It therefore concerned primarily with the relations between ‘the external reality’ and ‘the mental comprehension of empirical objects through our senses’.⁵⁴⁵ Its appearance as one of 160 entries in the article ‘Psychological Vocabulary’ in December of the same year captures this momentous intellectual endeavour.⁵⁴⁶ The stated goal of this epistemological exercise was to bring forth the meticulous description and explanation of the mechanics of man’s moral and psychological interiority. In this line of explanation, the Anglo-American Protestant missionaries chose to mount a two-thronged assault against the prevailing set of beliefs in Korea. On

⁵⁴² Gifford, D. L. (1898). *Every-day life in Korea: A collection of studies and stories*. Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., p.117

⁵⁴³ Kim, H.-S. (2003). 19 segi-mal~20 segi ch’o sŏyang sŏnkyosatŭl ŭi han’guk chongkyo ihae [The western missionaries’ understanding of Korean religion in the late 19th and early 20th century]. *Han’guk Kidokkyo wa yŏksa*, v.22

⁵⁴⁴ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1902). v.2, n.3, p.9; the most sophisticated debates on soul or *anima* more precisely dates back to the sixteenth century when Francis Sambiasi sought to introduce Thomism and spiritual anthropology to China, see Kim, H.-C. (1982). Uri nara kŭntae chŏngch’i sasang e kkich’in kidokkyo ŭi yŏngnyang [the impact of Christianity in Korea’s modern political thought]. *Han’guk chŏngch’ihak hoebo*, v.16, p.45-46

⁵⁴⁵ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1902). Yŏnghon ronsŏk ŭi sŏmun [preface to the psychology of soul], v.2, n.6, p.181

⁵⁴⁶ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1902). Yŏnghonron ŭi tanŏ [The vocabularies of psychology], v.2, n.12, pp.491-495

the one hand, in contrast to the earlier works of catechism which predominantly comprised of argument by assertion, the theologians in the 1900s increasingly employed both an observational common-sense approach as well as an inductive logic to arrive at the proof of God.

A systematic exposition of what Noble termed ‘the study of soul’ continued throughout the 1900s. A prelude to the series already made an appearance in November 1901, entitled ‘yŏnghon yŏngsaeng ich’i nonsöl’ [Kr: 영혼 영생 이치 론설; E: On the Theory of the Permanence of the Soul], outlining the three mental components comprising the soul: the opinion, the sense, and the belief. Together the three compartments of the human soul pilots the body as though ‘a machine’.⁵⁴⁷ This curiously mechanical representation of body-soul coupling may be a surprise to those familiar with the conventional portrayal of Anglo-American evangelical missionaries fixated on the Holy Spirit.⁵⁴⁸ Yet the analogy to machine appeared to have been a prevalent one, so much so that even human communication was often described in terms of ‘a machine most commonly used in human intercourse... verbal sounds are emitted so that the will of the soul may be conveyed and executed.’⁵⁴⁹

Not too dissimilar to the machine analogy, several contemporary missionaries advanced the explanation as to how Confucianism may have mechanically detached external sensory stimuli and inner stirrings of emotion in the mind of man. In the estimate of the Protestant missionaries, the most disturbing of all aspects of Confucianism was its mechanical ability to sever between human emotions natural to the soul by means of artificial rituals. The reaction of James Gale, a Canadian Presbyterian missionary, is worth quoting in full here:

⁵⁴⁷ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1901). Yŏnghon yŏngsaeng ich’i nonsöl [The theory of the immortality of soul], v.1, n.12, p.499

⁵⁴⁸ Ryu, T.-Y. (2001). Ch’ogi han’guk kyohoe esŏ ‘evangelical’ ŭi ŭimi wa hyŏndaejŏk haesŏk ŭi munje [Early Korean church meaning of ‘evangelical’ and the modern interpretative challenges]. *Han’guk kidokkyo wa yŏksa*, v.15, n.8, pp.117-144; Pak, Y.-K. (1998). Han’guk poggumjuŭi ŭi t’aedong [The conception of Korean evangelicalism]. *Sinhak Chinam*, v.256, pp.270-303

⁵⁴⁹ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1901). Nonsöl: mal [editorial: speech], v.1, n.10, p.399

To us the mind acts as a sort of telegraphic communication between the heart and the countenance. The joy or sorrow that overtakes us, is flashed from one to the other, so that we learn naturally to read the inner soul by these waves of light and shadow. In Korea the mind has other duties, the principal one of which is to cut off communication between these two, and to make them entirely independent; to flood the countenance with mere surface expression, or, if need be, to transform it into an expressionless wilderness... It needs but a short sojourn in the East to teach us that heart and countenance are not necessarily in communication; that there are beneath, hidden depths and undercurrents never dreamed of.⁵⁵⁰

These discussions suggest an outline of concerted efforts to bridge the internal phenomenological movements represented by emotions and external empirical objects such as human bodies.⁵⁵¹ It is noteworthy that the Christian analysis of the soul, depicted as the permanent seat of individual moral coherence and culpability, did not necessarily privilege the soul over body. Indeed, the human soul was pre-eminently subject to moral corruption as a result of which the body had become perishable. The main difference is that the body belonged to this world, whilst the soul 'to the next world'.⁵⁵² The Protestant missionaries began emphasising that whereas Koreans' knowledge was previously limited to that of the body', the knowledge of the soul was exclusive to Christianity.⁵⁵³ For many, the entire universe could not have been created *ex nihilo*, nor could the soul decay.⁵⁵⁴ Only a divine being capable of boundless power and infinite mercy could be behind the mystery of the 'two lives' of man; one to which the devil gave rise in the Garden of Eden, and the other, rescued by

⁵⁵⁰ Gale, J. S. (1898). *Korean sketches*. New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., pp.177-178

⁵⁵¹ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1900). Sinmyŏng yokhang, v.1, n.1, p.7

⁵⁵² Yi, U.-T. (1904). Uri nŭn yŏngsang chido rūl ani chŏnhŭlsu upsŭm [we cannot avoid spreading the message of immortality]. *Sinhak Wŏlbo*, v.4, n.1, p.491

⁵⁵³ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1901). Sinmyŏng yokhang, v.1, n.1, p.7; *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1901). v.1 n.4, p.228

⁵⁵⁴ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1904). Nakwŏn i yŏgi itso [heaven is here], v.4, n.3, p.30

Christ.⁵⁵⁵ Compared to this, the metaphysical dialectics of the Yin-Yang, opined one author, could not possibly have created the Cartesian mystery of how the soul interacts with body.⁵⁵⁶

Proclaiming the Christian superiority in the science of the soul could obtain its coherence only if it looped back to the story of Creation. Therefore, the existence of the soul, body and the self were articulated in such a way the indivisible and eternal nature of the soul foregrounded the integrity of body and personal identity.⁵⁵⁷ With the outlined schema, the final task was to re-situate the soul in relation to the Law and persuade Koreans of the moral primacy of individual salvation over the question of collective destiny. This supernatural knowledge of the soul in relation to which the human body was imagined marked the dividing line between Confucians and Christians. Noble's scholarly account above was this turning point in Korea insofar as his intervention was part of the efforts to return the ancestral question to a theological ground away from familial and social contexts.

The law, salvation and conscience

No sooner had the concept of the soul taken hold than the Korean evangelists began preaching that the reason one must accept Christianity is 'firstly to learn how to save one's soul; secondly, to safeguard one's body... because our soul is the gift of God'.⁵⁵⁸ This was as much a statement of fact as a statement of purpose, for once the true knowledge concerning the soul had been made known, the obvious task with which the Protestants busied themselves was to encourage as many Koreans to save their souls as possible. From the intellectual perspective, this new understanding had a number of profound ramifications, most significant of which was the concept of human equality. For instance, the terms in which the practice of infanticide was condemned and prohibited in 1901 was

⁵⁵⁵ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1900). Sinmyŏng yokhang, v.1, n.1, p.8

⁵⁵⁶ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1907). Sŏngsan yuramgi [travelogue of the holy mountain], v.5, n.2, p.544

⁵⁵⁷ For an earlier type, see *Kusyeron* [On Salvation] (1899) Korea, publisher not identified

⁵⁵⁸ *T'aehan K'ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1900). Kongbu ŭi kangryŏng [the rules on studying], July 10, p.439

on the ground that 'children have soul just as adults do and as such no Christian ought to treat children differently.'⁵⁵⁹

The proscription on infanticide was relatively trivial compared to the issue soon to confront the entire Protestant mission establishment, the very same one haunting the Christian mission endeavours in East Asia since the days of Matteo Ricci [b.1552-1610]. Ricci was an Italian Jesuit priest whose distinctive missiology in China led to a number of controversies in China and Europe, above all the issue of ancestral worship and the ensuing figurist controversy that still reverberated in late nineteenth century Korea.⁵⁶⁰ Despite the support for tolerance regarding the ancestral question at the Shanghai Missionary Conference in 1877 and 1890 thanks largely to James Legge, the general Protestant attitude with respect to ancestral worship did not soften.⁵⁶¹ Rather, heated confrontations with Confucian scholars would harden the Protestant position over time as the doctrinal position that categorically excluded non-believers – living or dead – from the 'congregation of the saints' gained afoot.⁵⁶²

Confronting the criticism that Christians disrespect their parents by refusing to conduct ancestral worship, Protestants countered that Koreans were gripped by an erroneous understanding of the 'soul' which they believe to be in need of constant care and material sustenance, and whose condition of wellbeing is *elementally* reflected in the state of one's sharpness of wits, healthy countenance, or physical constitution.⁵⁶³ Believing as though the souls of the deceased could be

⁵⁵⁹ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1901). Yesu wa ōrin aidul ira [Jesus and little children], v.1, n.3, p.85

⁵⁶⁰ For the discussions on Matteo Ricci, see Yi, U.-G. (1987). *Chayŏnpŏp, chayŏndŏk ūi pŏp ūisik yŏn'gu: Mat'eo Rich'i wa Sunam An Chŏng-bok ūi chayŏnpŏp sasang ūl chungsim ūro*. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, T'aerim Ch'ulp'ansa; Kim, S.-H. (2012). *Mat'eo Rich'i wa Chu Hŭi, kŭrigo Chŏng Yag-yong: "Ch'ŏnju sirŭi" wa Tong Asia yuhak ūi chip'yŏng*. Sŏul-si, Simsan. For a general Jesuit encounter, see Lim, C.-T. (2016). Rodrigues the gift-giver: a Korean envoy's portrayal of his encounter with a Jesuit in 1631. *Korea Journal*, v.56, n.2, pp.134-162

⁵⁶¹ Oak, S. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876-1915*. Waco: Baylor University Press, pp.196-204

⁵⁶² Oak, S. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876-1915*. Waco: Baylor University Press, p.205

⁵⁶³ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1901). Mansa mundap [answers to all questions], v.1 n.11, pp.445-6

palliated by offerings of food was to arrogate that over which God reserves the exclusive 'right'.⁵⁶⁴

We are no more capable of negotiating the spiritual welfare of our parents than they are for us.⁵⁶⁵

Ancestral worship is as futile as 'putting grass into the mouth of a dead cow', for it is physically plain to observe that 'not a single morsel of offerings to ancestral spirits is consumed'.⁵⁶⁶

In light of this one is better placed to understand the principle underlying Protestant objections to ancestral worship: God is the sole author of soul and body, not one's biological parents. Indeed, by 1907 the Protestants issued an unequivocal denial of the role of biological parents in the creation of offspring.⁵⁶⁷ In so doing the definition of God, initially conceived of as a 'supreme monarch' or 'king of kings' deserving of one's true loyalty, rapidly assimilated the authority of Confucian *pater familias*.⁵⁶⁸ Conceived as such, it was reasoned that the filial duty towards one's biological parents (Kr: 孝; C: 孝) ought to extend no further than physical care of one's parents in this life in accordance with the fifth commandment. The implication arising from this new schema of humanity was that biological parents were *reduced* to the status of 'brothers and sisters' of their offspring, all equal before God. With the subordination of biological father under this schema, Jesus Christ was occasionally reassigned to the role of an 'older brother' [Kr: 형님].⁵⁶⁹

The prospective converts were often warned that the faith pleasing to God would *indubitably* result in alienation from 'those outside', not to mention a few 'enemies'.⁵⁷⁰ Such an open and defiant refutation of ancestral worship prompted near-universal acrimonious social sanctions at that time and was thought responsible for unravelling communal moral bonds by disturbing spirits. In

⁵⁶⁴ *T'aehan K'ürisüdoin Hoebo*. (1900) Ponün kut kwa ponün kut (seeing things and seeing things), Jan 24, p. 314

⁵⁶⁵ *Sinhak Wölbo*. (1904). Usang ül pehalgöt [Abolish the idol], v.4, n.6, p.142

⁵⁶⁶ *Sinhak Wölbo*. (1901). Chusök [commentary]. v.1, n.12, pp.488-9

⁵⁶⁷ *Sinhak Wölbo*. (1907). Chŭngkō ron' [the theory of evidence], v.5, n.4-5, p.614

⁵⁶⁸ *T'aehan K'ürisüdoin Hoebo*. (1899). Hananim ūn manwang ūi wang [God is the King of kings], Nov 9, p.247; *Sinhak Wölbo*. (1901). Hananim anjon e haenghasim [behaviour before the Throne of God], v.1, n.10, p.389; *Sinhak Wölbo*. (1903). Hananim kkesō uri imgŭn i toeōssŭni uri rŭl kuwōon hasirira [The Lord has become our lord so we shall be saved]. v.3, n.9, p.317

⁵⁶⁹ *Sinhak Wölbo*. (1903). Hobu hohyōng hal kwōnri rŭl toro ch'ajŭm [Recovering the right to call father and older brother], v.3, n.2, pp.583-4

⁵⁷⁰ *T'aehan K'ürisüdoin Hoebo*. (1900). Wonsu tŭlŭl sōro hwahaeham [enemies forgive each other], March, 28, p.358

response the Confucian scholars called the doctrine of Christian salvation as an anathema and slammed it as an act of ‘supreme filial impiety’: ‘[how] can I go to heaven by myself and become unfilial to my parents and unfaithful to friends?’⁵⁷¹ The obvious moral choice was to ‘dutifully follow one’s parents and friends, and keep them company’ in eternal hellfire.⁵⁷² Swiftly condemning this preference for collective destruction over individual salvation as a ‘reckless stubbornness’ inspired by the sin of pride, one of the first native Protestant ministers named Ch’oe Pyŏng-hŏn, nonetheless failed to offer any convincing moral pretexts for abandoning the eternal company of kinsmen in hell over the everlasting solitude of paradise.

Commenting on the Pauline epistles to the effect that ‘sin was not taken into account when the Law was yet to be promulgated’, Ch’oe could not but equivocate on the issue.⁵⁷³ The challenge was offering a plausible escape out of this soteriological deadlock without recourse to something like Marian intercession. Some were hopeful that ‘though we [Koreans] may have violated when ignorant of the Old Testament, God still forgives’.⁵⁷⁴ Others expressed that ‘if any person in the past had done only good works, he might have gone to heaven by the merits of Jesus’.⁵⁷⁵ In the first Korean Protestant apologia entitled *The myth dispelled, truth explained* (1899; Kr: 파혹진선론; C: 破惑眞善論), Roh Pyŏngsŏn maintained that the ‘those did wrong before the promulgation of the (Mosaic) law are exempt from the punishment’.⁵⁷⁶ Still others, as seen earlier, maintained that the fragments of the Mosaic Law contained in Confucian teaching would have been sufficient to secure ancestors a place in paradise.

⁵⁷¹ Ch’oe, P.-H. (1899). Chyungch’yu kajŏril [Korean Thanksgiving Day]. *T’aehan K’ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*, Sept, 27

⁵⁷² *T’aehan K’ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1899). Kochippult’ong [stubbornness], March 8

⁵⁷³ Ch’oe, P.-H. (1901). Choe tori [the nature of sin]. *Shinhak Wŏlbo*, v.1, n.8, p.310, in reference to The Epistles to Roman 5.13; for an excellent overview of the ancestral problem, see Oak, S. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876-1915*. Waco: Baylor University Press, Chapter 4

⁵⁷⁴ *T’aehan K’ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1899). Kyoin i töuk samkahal il [Things to be avoided by the believers], April 12, p.84

⁵⁷⁵ Oak, S. (2013). *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876-1915*. Waco: Baylor University Press, p.189

⁵⁷⁶ See n.594 for Roh P’yŏngsŏn

Faced with the conundrum of reconciling the ancestral question without diluting the theological position, those committed to the binding nature of the Law irrespective of time and space, turned to the faculty of natural moral intuition.⁵⁷⁷ The name Christians gave to this inner moral compass was ‘conscience’ (Kr: 양심; C: 良心). Its role was to steer individual conducts so as to keep it in harmony with the divine law. In a scriptural commentary ‘The law given by God does not discriminate high or low’, one learns that ‘just as birds naturally build their nests’ so even in the heathen hearts are inscribed with ‘invariably the Mosaic Law’.⁵⁷⁸ God, wrote one Methodist missionary, gave ‘the Mosaic Commandments directly to the Jews’ and ‘the law of conscience’ to the gentiles’.⁵⁷⁹ The power of divine benevolence could be observed as much by inspection of the sky above as by introspection of one’s conscience.⁵⁸⁰ Above all, Koreans were gently reminded that by virtue of the illuminating warmth of conscience provided by the Grace of the Lord to which Korean ancestors would have been naturally drawn they may have saved their souls ultimately.⁵⁸¹ Even those beyond the pale would still be equipped with the moral contents of the Law because the conscience within all of us ‘permits our action to be in agreement with the Mosaic Law’, so that the universality of the Law had been in effect and enforced beyond the Tribes of Israel.⁵⁸² Following this, Ch’oe Pyŏng-hŏn argued that even those ignorant of the Law nonetheless ‘are gifted with conscience, and could discern the right and wrong’.⁵⁸³ Kim Chang-sik, the very first native Protestant minister in Korea, likewise, reasoned that the universal fear of death stems from the innate knowledge of the ‘judgment before God’, and the conscience was there to ‘guard the soul’ from perdition.⁵⁸⁴ The

⁵⁷⁷ *T’aehan K’ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1899). Aug 30, p.172. This was in reference to the Letters to Romans 7.14.

⁵⁷⁸ *T’aehan K’ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1899). July 12, pp.158-9

⁵⁷⁹ Hardie, R. A. (1919). Loma chusŏk. [Commentary on the Epistles to the Romans]. *Sinhak Segye*, v.4, n.5, p.8

⁵⁸⁰ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1907). [Unknown title]. v.5, n.1, p.471

⁵⁸¹ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1904). Yesu puhwal ttut ūl saenggak ham [Thinking about the meaning of Jesus’s resurrection], v.4, n.5, p.103; on the cultural and intellectual appeals of Protestantism to women and other oppressed classes, see Kim, A. E. (2001). Political insecurity, social chaos, religious void and the rise of Protestantism in late nineteenth-century Korea. *Social History*, v.26, n.3, pp.269-271; Min, K.-B. (2007). *Han’guk Kidok kyohoesa: Han’guk minjok kyohoe hyŏngsŏng kwajŏngsa*. Sŏul-si, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’anbu, pp.212-216

⁵⁸² *T’aehan K’ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1899). July 12, p.159

⁵⁸³ Ch’oe, P.-H. (1901). Choedori [The nature of sin]. *Sinhak Wŏlbo*, v.1 n.10, p.450

⁵⁸⁴ *T’aehan k’ŭrisŭdoin hoebo*. (1899). Ilp’ok yŏnsok, Aug 16, p.178

sense of ‘shame that one spontaneously feels when naked’ was the emotive proof engendered by conscience.⁵⁸⁵ Others cited that the natural and universal fear of death was ‘due to the judgment after death’ of which everyone is dimly aware.⁵⁸⁶

Yet the existence of innate morality consistent with the Mosaic Law failed to resolve the underlying tension with regard to ancestral (and wider communitarian) issues for good. Instead, the dogmatic insistence on conscience only served to highlight the universal condition of corruption, the cause for which conscience came into being in the first place.⁵⁸⁷ From this related set of discussions on conscience there logically arose a crisp outline of Original Sin, a baffling yet permanent condition of humanity from which ‘not even an innocent child could escape’.⁵⁸⁸ ‘Man is by nature evil’, wrote the author of *Temperament and Reason* (Kr: 성품 이치론; C: 性品理致論) ‘since the day Adam succumbed to temptation, and all subsequent generations are sown with this evil disposition.’⁵⁸⁹ As a result of the original transgression man was marked vulnerable to the condition of scarcity, age, and occasional ‘depredation by the wicked animals’ still common in Korea.⁵⁹⁰

The analytic significance of conscience was that it brought together all three major theological concerns of the day – the nature of the soul, the universality of the Law, the general state of corruption – into a single field of analysis. The radical Protestant belief that in order to be truly free one must confess Christian faith and observe the Law could be intelligibly parsed. In this way, the concept of liberty was gradually fused with the promise of spiritual salvation. With the Christian science of the soul enjoyed pride of place in the intellectual schema over the Confucian silence on

⁵⁸⁵ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1901). Chusŏk [commentary], v.1, n.9, p.370

⁵⁸⁶ *T’aehan K’ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1899). Ilp’ok yŏnsok. August 16, p.178

⁵⁸⁷ The first scriptural commentary on the Genesis in relation to this point was published in *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1907). v.5, n.3, p.569

⁵⁸⁸ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1901). Saram ŭi wonchoe [the original sin of man], v.1, n.10, p.449

⁵⁸⁹ *T’aehan K’ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1899). Sŏngp’um ichi ron [the theory of personality], Nov 30, p.262

⁵⁹⁰ *T’aehan K’ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1899). Epwŏt chŏngnyŏnhoe: ōrisokke saenggak hanŭn irŭl ilkkaeunŭn mal [Epworth Young Men’s Association: words that will wake up the ignorant ones], June 22, p.151

the things invisible. Drawing on this argument, one is well-placed to grasp the subsequent trajectory towards the theologised nature of liberty based on the ground of conscience from the mid-1900s.⁵⁹¹

Liberty of conscience, conscience of liberty

With the conscience firmly integrated into the architecture of the soul, one may reasonably wonder if this conceptualisation prompted any efforts to conscript secular power or re-arrange society or polity to reflect this new-found religious view. At the very least one would speculate a hint of theory of toleration from the Protestant quarters. In other words, was this the watershed moment in which the notion of liberty achieved a status of fundamental right as a result of conscience in Korea?

Certainly by the mid-1900s, the new strand of thought concerning liberty and conscience was actively being discussed within the Protestant community whose probing gaze turned introspective in search of freedom from within.⁵⁹²

Following Jaisohn, some Korean converts had advanced an understanding of liberty that was explicitly politically oriented. For instance, Roh P'yöngsön (b.1871-1941: Kr: 로병선), the co-founder of *Hyöpsönghoe* (Kr: 협성회) the radical student movement that grew out of the Paijæ School, and of the Christian youth association *Epwit Chöngnyönhoe*⁵⁹³, enumerated multiple meanings of freedom in March 1900 in line with the combination of political and civic concerns for bodily integrity, absence of physical impediments, and protection of private property (first, the liberty of life and body; second, private property; third, freedom to engage in private enterprise; fourth, to organise

⁵⁹¹ *T'aehan K'ürisüdoin Hoebo*. (1900). Kwach'ön p'yönji [A letter from Kwach'ön], April 4, p.359

⁵⁹² Pak, S.-K. (1904). Nakwön ün yogi itso [Paradise is here]. *Sinhak Wölbo*, v.4, n.3, p.32; Pak, O.-M. (1904). Sipchagun üi kyöksö [the call for action for the crusaders]. *Sinhak Wölbo*, v.4, n.6, pp.154-185

⁵⁹³ Cho, I.-C. (1998). Han'guk epwit ch'öngnyönhoe üi ch'angrip kyöngwi wa ch'ogi hwaldong [The reasons behind the formation of the Korean Epworth League and its early activities]. *Han'guk kiddokyo wa yöksa* (Christianity and History in Korea), v.8, n.3, pp.79-109

into groups; fifth, of religious practice; sixth, of speech; seventh, of honour).⁵⁹⁴ As such, the relationship between liberty and conscience was coherently clearly theorised, and a suggestion that conscience being entitled to a legal protection from the external authority would have been utterly unfamiliar. The normative question as to why political authority ought to accommodate a community of believers potentially at odds with the state-sanctioned beliefs never materialised in this context.

Instead, encircled by the theological economy of salvation and divine judgment, freedom was conceived to be in possession of moral salience only insofar as it was obedient to the Law. As Charles Deming put it, though freedom is technically ‘available to all’ the exercise at variance with the Law is to ‘let people become animals’.⁵⁹⁵ This interpretation invariably related to the Genesis in which Adam’s act of transgression resulted in original sin and the corruption of humanity. This allowed the Protestants to argue that freedom is authentic *only to the extent* that ‘one understands the cause and follows it faithfully’.⁵⁹⁶ If the idea of licence placed a negative boundary on the domain of liberty, the positive determination of liberty depended upon the inner compass of conscience. Indeed as early as 1900, the Protestant missionaries stressed that ‘acts contrary to the Law’ did not equal freedom for the obvious repercussion of the divine punishment in the afterlife.⁵⁹⁷ Another wrote that ‘[the] right to freedom’ was ‘a divine gift to discern right and wrong’, not an aboriginal entitlement awaiting validation by the wider political community or secular authority.⁵⁹⁸ In other words, liberty embodied an innate capacity, if not a divinely implanted predisposition to obey divine morality above any temporal laws and the individual duty to observe the Law. Freedom was above all not a licence to ‘indulge the sinful nature’, but the personal volition to live the faith in God. One

⁵⁹⁴ *T’aehan K’ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1900). Saram ŭi chayukwŏnri [The Right to Freedom by Man], March 14, p.344, 348

⁵⁹⁵ Deming, C. (1917). Kujŭngron [the theory of salvation]. *Sinhak Segye*, v.2, n.4, p.23

⁵⁹⁶ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1904). Chik’inhoe ilgi [the diary of chik’in association], v.4, n.2, p.530

⁵⁹⁷ *T’aehan K’ŭrisŭdoin Hoebo*. (1900). Saram ŭi chayukwŏnri [A person’s right to liberty], Mar 14, p.344

⁵⁹⁸ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1901). Chusŏk’ [Commentary], v.1, n.9, p.368

did not choose, but ‘called to be free’.⁵⁹⁹ This coercive compulsion to be at liberty (in order to worship freely and study the scripture) informed the theoretical underpinning of such claims as ‘Protestantism is the bedrock of national prosperity and independence’.⁶⁰⁰

The political implication of this identification of the Law with freedom, this theologisation of liberty was enduring and far-reaching. For Robert A. Hardie, the Canadian Methodist minister and the head of the Methodist seminary, liberty was first and foremost ‘what God authorises’.⁶⁰¹ This remarkable claim, issued in the wake of the March First movement summarises this line of thought. Commenting on Epistles to the Romans⁶⁰², Hardie assured that ‘God gave to man freedom and conscience so that he may enjoy the riches and beauties of the world God created for us’.⁶⁰³ The sovereignty of the Lord, according to Hardie, in no way impinges on one’s freedom in everyday life, for ‘the Creator... honours the freedom He gave us’.⁶⁰⁴ The love and power of the Lord – that is the love for His creatures and the power to condemn the very same does not contradict each other. It simply points to the mystery of the Lord beyond our human comprehension.⁶⁰⁵

The conventional predisposition to see this theologised vision of liberty as a timely and calculated capitulation in time of the fundamental political transformation in and around Korea ought to be resisted. Instead, it ought to be contextualised as part of wider efforts to imagine the sovereign authority in relation to which liberty came to exist. As such, liberty represented a set of radically different ideas than that to which the current convention ascribes. Framed in the theological notion of conscience, the idea of liberty for Korean Protestants was not so much the negative ‘natural’ right with which to circumscribe the legal scope of the secular authority as an overwhelming sense of duty to secure the spiritual salvation in the afterlife. Without the guarantee of eternal spiritual salvation

⁵⁹⁹ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1902). Man’guk chuil konggwa, v.2, n.8, p.309. The passage is from Galatian 5:13.

⁶⁰⁰ *Maeil Sinmun*. (1898). Nonsŏl, May 28; see also Min, K.-B. (2007). *Han’guk Kidok kyohoesa: Han’guk minjok kyohoe hyŏngsŏng kwajŏngsa*. Sŏul-si, Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’anbu, pp.256-7

⁶⁰¹ Hardie, R. A. (1919). Loma chusŏk. [Commentary on the Epistles to the Romans]. *Sinhak Segye*, v.4, n.5, p.9

⁶⁰² The passage is from Romans, 9:22-32

⁶⁰³ Hardie, R. A. (1919). Loma chusŏk. [Commentary on the Epistles to the Romans]. *Sinhak Segye*, v.4, n.5, p.9

⁶⁰⁴ Hardie, R. A. (1919). Loma chusŏk. [Commentary on the Epistles to the Romans]. *Sinhak Segye*, v.4, n.5, pp.4-5

⁶⁰⁵ Hardie, R. A. (1919). Loma chusŏk. [Commentary on the Epistles to the Romans]. *Sinhak Segye*, v.4, n.5, p.9

and the right guidance to attain redemption in the afterlife, freedom in this life possessed no value. This conceptual structure of freedom was similar to Weber's characterisation of the calling, i.e., 'the valuation of the fulfilment of duty in worldly affairs as the highest form which the moral activity of the individual could assume'.⁶⁰⁶ But the exercise in 'worldly affairs' to which Weber referred was not a substitute of a more elevated and pure spiritual assignment. The exercise of liberty, which undoubtedly bestowed 'every-day worldly a religious significance' meant adequately satisfying the commandments of the Law, studying the Scripture, and redeeming oneself in the eye of the Creator.

Political authority and liberty after 1905

In Japan, for example, you have a highly ordered Government
that has given freedom of conscience.⁶⁰⁷

The dramatic change in political situation after the Russo-Japan War was full in illustration when Itō Hirobumi, the first Resident General of Korea, came to Korea together with George Turnbull Ladd, a renowned philosopher at Yale University in 1907.⁶⁰⁸ This pair praised the works of the Anglo-American missionaries in Korea and the missionary establishment reciprocated by heartily endorsing the Japanese take-over.⁶⁰⁹ Noting that Japan 'conceded to its citizens by law freedom of conscience... the only non-Christian country that has as yet done so, in an effective way'⁶¹⁰, Itō announced a plan to extend the Japanese constitutional guarantee of the 'right of conscience' to Korea. This move

⁶⁰⁶ Weber, M. (1992). *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London, Routledge, p.40

⁶⁰⁷ World Missionary Conference. (1910). *Report of Commission VII: Missions and governments: with Supplement: Presentation and discussion of the Report in the Conference on 20th June 1910*. Edinburgh, Published for the World Missionary Conference by Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, p.148

⁶⁰⁸ For the detailed account, see Ladd, G. T. (1908). *In Korea with Marquis Ito*. New York, C. Scribner's Sons

⁶⁰⁹ *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1907). Yumyŏnghaŋ paksa [A Famous scholar], v.5, n.2, p.503; for the full account of the visit see Ladd, G. T. (1908). *In Korea with Marquis Ito*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons

⁶¹⁰ World Missionary Conference. (1910). *Report of Commission VII: Missions and governments: with Supplement: Presentation and discussion of the Report in the Conference on 20th June 1910*. Edinburgh, Published for the World Missionary Conference by Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, p.150

indicated, above all, the new government's willingness to resolve the legal recognition of church property and personnel, the long-standing grievance of the Christian mission organisations in Korea.⁶¹¹

In this chapter, I highlight the Christian political ideas informing the episode above and the specific manner in which wider theological and moral debates surrounding the Anglo-American mission were introduced and disseminated in Korea. In this manner, I shed light on the circuitous line of thought articulating the belief that Protestantism alone possessed the moral and intellectual resource with which to reform the corrupt Confucian polity and obtain individual redemption to the concept of liberty. In this fashion the road connecting corruption and liberty passed through the systematic exposition on the nature of the soul and the exclusive knowledge of the Creative purpose, which unassisted reason could never fully comprehend. Without access to the revealed knowledge in the Biblical scripture, the missionaries maintained the deficiency in the Confucian epistemic system expressed in the form of the ancestral worship, ritualised behaviourism, and gross social inequity.

The Protestants launched three lines of attack – the universal historiography, the science of the soul, and the existence of conscience – each contributing to the theological dimension of liberty. By weaving these strands, the Protestant intellectuals put forward their own vision of liberty whose political imperative it is to submit to the Law. Accordingly, liberty neither pointed to a primordial condition of freedom lost to history nor a negative right. With conscience and the soul assimilated into the conceptualisation of liberty, in which licit and illicit are determined by the content of the Law, the scope and definition of liberty became identical to the observance and submission to the divine positive law with little or no bearing on secular political authority. Unmoored from the ideational ground of the political, liberty became something not immediately intuitive to those outside the Protestant faith, and the meaning of liberty and sovereign authority remained deeply

⁶¹¹ On Itō Hirobumi, see *Yesuhoe Sinbo*. (1907). Kidok chōngnyŏnhoe sangyang yesik [Christian Youth club ceremony], Nov 27, p.11; *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1907). Kyohoe p'ippak [church persecution], v.5, n.4-5, p.634; *Sinhak Wŏlbo*. (1907). Yŏnghang chungyo, v.5, n.1, p.483; *The Korea Review*. (1905). The Visit of Miss Roosevelt, v.5, n.9, p.333; *The Korea Review*. (1905). Question and Answer, v.5, n.7, pp.264-5

obscure. Its development from the beginnings in the 1880s to its post-Chosŏn theological turn described in the thesis will require further exploration into all the areas of Korean spiritual and secular life. Only then could one begin to fathom Weber's pronouncement as to why the modern man has become 'unable to give religious ideas a significance for culture and national character which they deserve.'⁶¹²

⁶¹² Weber, M. (1992). *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London, Routledge, p.183

Chapter 7: Conclusion

[...] who would lead a nation out of bondage into liberty, the only liberty worth calling the name or that sinful mortals can use, the liberty of Christ [...]⁶¹³

The thesis presents an account of the Protestant political thought which emerges in the period between 1886 and 1916 in Korea. The chief aim of the research is to explore the interaction between religious and political thought in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century Korea by way of contextualising salient cultural, social, religious and political issues of the day in relation to which Korean Protestant political thought was constituted. In highlighting the ideological and discursive features most pertinent to this formation, I cast light upon a segment of political thought on the basis of which this new ‘community of believers’ could legitimise political claims in the rapidly changing political environment – the idea of liberty.

The Korean historians are unlikely to mount robust challenge to the argument that the new political understandings arising from the group composed of foreign missionaries and converts made vital contributions in shaping the future of Korean politics. The cadre of luminaries include some of the most consequential individuals such as Rhee Syngman, Yun Ch'i-ho, and Philip Jaisohn. This broad church movement is captured in four successive themes around which I structured my thesis – cultural, political, economic, and theological – each represented by the American Protestant missionaries, a pair of a radical revolutionary and counter-revolutionary, a free-trade internationalist, and the elects of the new community respectively.

In analysing these themes, three interpretative tasks are outlined: firstly, sketching the emergent ideational structure reflective of the specific political or theological concerns; secondly, highlighting

⁶¹³ Underwood, L. H. (1904). *Fifteen years among the top-knot*. Boston: American Tract Society, p.269

the moral and political grounds for the support of political Protestantism to which many political activists and intellectuals gave credence as the only viable political solution to contemporary crisis; finally, it explores the reasons as to why the Protestant political thought converged on the idea of liberty. In the next section I will summarise the central arguments of each chapter, followed by the discussion on some of the issues facing the analysis of intersection between religion and politics in Korea. In the final section I will conclude with some reflections on the study of politics and religion.

Chapter breakdown

Chapter 2 summarises the conventional approach to the study of modern Korean political thought and explains the methodological choice, that of historical contextualism. I argue that scholars of modern Korean political thought have been riveted by the questions of nation-building, modernisation, and modernity, all of which hold the nation as a given unit of reference. With the nation posited as an unchanging, a-political plane, the secular and church historians competed over the degree to which each contributed to the Korean nation- and state-building project. Finding this approach anachronistic, I contend that contextual methodology is helpful in illuminating the ideational interactions between religion and politics in this period.

Since the 1960s the conventional scholarship on modern Korean political thought has been exhaustively researched along the axes of colonialism and modernisation, and by the 1970s many church historians by and large marched under the nationalist standard, emphasising the institutional, material, and ideological contributions the Protestant organisations made to the modernisation programme. According to this historiography, the patriotic efforts for 'national self-empowerment' received instrumental institutional support from the Protestant church, which facilitated the flow of modern amenities and rationality critical for educating its future. Citing numerous public institutions founded and funded by the Anglo-American mission organisations, nationalist church scholars argue

that there is a significant institutional and personnel correlation between the church and patriotic-nationalist camp. That this was inspired by Christian humanitarianism and guided by the principle of the separation of church and state, not political expediency, is adduced as the proof of the overall sincerity of the mission endeavour despite their obvious shortcomings.

The secular nationalist historians challenged this reading by emphasising the foreign missionaries' entanglement with the imperialist and capitalist ventures, and their undue exercise of ecclesiastical, financial, and intellectual resources in a paternalistic manner. With the competing claims on modernisation and national salvation on the stake, the church and secular historians confronted an interpretative stalemate. This deadlock invited several critical interventions from the Marxist, feminist, and postcolonialist corner since the 1980s, which interrogated the manners in which certain voices and struggles were marginalised in the construction of the imagined monolithic community. However, the critical interrogation of the nation nonetheless failed to shed light on either the substantive claims or the normative purchase it gained amongst the Koreans except in the form of epistemic violence and ideological veil.

I argue that that the contextualist interpretative commitment to 'read authors correctly' may be gainfully employed in underscoring the intended contemporary meanings and help situate the texts in the relevant historical contexts. In particular the contextual approach is well-suited for investigating the contemporary normative considerations because the assumptions at work are reflective of the social, political and moral concerns and aspirations specific to the period. The contextual interpretation also avoids assuming 'religion' as a given object comprised of features common to all its sub-species (a transcendental reference point, belief in afterlife, canonical holy writings, acceptance or commitment to a set of convictions unverifiable by empirical science, et cetera) but treats individual ideational components as discrete entities that actively negotiate the conceptual boundary of 'religion' itself.

Chapter 3 explores the ideological contexts of the historico-political terms by which Korea was described and characterised by the American Protestant missionaries. The chapter relates the terminologies such as despotism, slavery, ritual, right, and liberty back to the contemporary Anglo-American political, religious and ideological contexts. The American missionaries arriving on the shore of Korea in the 1880s betray the outline of the conventions of the sectionalised religious culture of the United States such as abolitionism, anti-Catholic nativism, and the New South ideology. This intellectual mapping calls into question the anachronistic characterisation in the literature, most notably social Darwinism and the American separation between the church and state.

These terminologies not only carried moral and ideological connotations highly corrosive in and of themselves to the conventions of social arrangement in Korea, but also provided new vantage point from which to assess the prevailing political condition of Chosŏn. The stories of a hermetic kingdom in the enthrallment of Confucianism and Roman Catholicism secured American Protestant missionaries' attention and predisposed their ideological vision to that of the struggle between tyrannical oppression and the religion of liberty. To the prevalent fear of foreign invasion in Chosŏn regarding Roman Catholicism, the American Protestant missionaries glossed the additional suspicions of the Catholic establishment. According to the American Protestant missionaries, it was this mixture of popery, rebelliousness, and despotism that predisposed Roman Catholics to conspire with foreign enemies such as France. The Protestant missionaries took care to publicise their religious doctrine consistent with loyalty. The Korean church historians characterise this ideological stance as congruent with the constitutional separation of church and state in the United States, an understanding which did not come into existence until the 1950s. Instead, the reformed and true religion, many American missionaries assented, was vital to maintain the liberty of individual and the state.

Chapter 4 examines the period in which the political ideas are deployed in Korea, marked by the arrival of Phillip Jaisohn and Yun Ch'i-ho in the second half of the 1890s. Arguably the most

consequential of the intellectuals in this period, they were accomplices to the unsuccessful palace *coup* in 1884, upon the failure of which both fled to the United States and were educated in the North and South respectively. By the time the pair returned, they absorbed much of the sectionalised intellectual landscape of the contemporary America with the former ingrained in the culture of radical abolitionism and the free labour ideology, whilst the latter was immersed in the idea of the fallen nature of man.

Contrary to the conventional portrayals of his benign and enlightened patriotism, I argue that Jaisohn's ambition was to overthrow the dynastic monarchy by means of popular revolt, whilst Yun acted as the countervailing conservative, however reluctant. Jaisohn's political programme was revolutionary, not because of the bourgeois individualism he acquired in America but rather because his political conviction committed him to the necessity of abolishing the regime altogether. To this political end, Jaisohn relentlessly scandalised the two facts of life in contemporary Chosŏn: the general disregard for individual property, and the flawed opinion on loyalty. Out of this state of moral outrage was conjured a Jaisohnian vision of liberty.

Knowing that private property possessed little moral currency on its own, Jaisohn instead equated the denial of private property to the condition of rebelliousness and slavery. Leveraging on the endless publicity of official extortion, unlawful expropriation, and government corruption in his vernacular newspaper *Tongnip Sinmun*, Jaisohn sought to inflame the sense of outrage by stressing how the corrupt officials extracting 'taxes' had the effect of rendering 'loyal subjects' to that of 'private slaves'. Alienated from the fruit of one's labour and possessing no legal recourse, people revolted. Dispossessed of the security of private property to subsist in this life, Jaisohn argued, people are incapable of loyalty. From here it was but one short step away from suggesting that the yoke of unlawful taxation, by turning loyal subjects into rebellious lots, was tantamount to the crime of 'treason'. Jaisohn fused the two distinct concerns, one an overwhelming sense of duty towards loyalty, and the other, the ambiguous status of private property into a single political register.

Pressing the sharp edge of his theory of private property against the existing political regime was the task to which Jaisohn applied his prodigious energy for the remainder of his time in Chosŏn. Jaisohn set alight the popular discontent by his damning account of slavery and his defence of private property as loyalty. The suggestive tone of the message allowed Jaisohn to tap into the most frustrated segments of the Seoul population, i.e., dislocated young men taking refuge under the American mission schools, and the urban dwellers. Both groups responded enthusiastically to an argument that combined a traditional sense of loyalty and the precarious existence of private property at the turn of the century.

This is not to cast Jaisohn as a native advocate of possessive individualism. Jaisohn's defence of private property is essentially the obligation to safeguard what God commanded: acquiescing to the dismal state of affairs is the violation of God-given duty to resist unlawful expropriation of one's private property, the sanctity of which no temporal authority could appropriate without one's consent. To this end Jaisohn's political arrangement obtained moral legitimacy only to the extent to which the fulfilment of individual imperative to private property was facilitated. The simmering political discontent was brought to the boiling point over the issue of Russian encroachment in early 1898 when the students and activists took to the street to protest in defence of 'one's natural rights' against the monarch who had become 'a slave'. By April 1898 Jaisohn was exiled for the second time from Korea. The mass movement Jaisohn triggered raged on until it was brought down by the accusation of republican conspiracy in December the same year.

Yun Ch'i-ho, a close colleague of Jaisohn inherited the control of *Tongnip Sinmum* and the riotous civic associations after Jaisohn left in 1898. The deep reservation Yun harboured towards the revolutionary programme of Jaisohn was rooted in his personal exposure to the harsh reality of the American South where Reconstruction failed to lift the freed blacks out of poverty and remove entrenched racism. Convinced that revolutionary approach was not only misguided but profoundly insufficient to transform the corrupt hearts of the ignorant multitude, Yun remained deeply

unsympathetic to Jaisohn's political vision. His reservation, steeled by the conservative theology of Warren Candler – his bishop and life-long patron at Emory University – belied in Yun's firm belief that only manual labour and unquestioning faith could bring about the possibility of spiritual salvation, not governmental intervention or speculative philosophy.

Chapter 5 analyses the manners in which revolutionary political ideas were transformed into liberal internationalism and economic concerns in the 1900s. Filling in the vacuum created by the departure of Jaisohn was the rise of Rhee at the forefront of Korean mass politics in 1898. His star fell however when he was imprisoned and sentenced to death for his republican conspiracy at the end of 1898. Upon release in 1904 Rhee was dispatched to the United States and remained there until 1910 when he earned the doctorate from Princeton University in the field of international politics and law.

At the heart of Rhee's thought stretching from the earlier writings, notably *The Spirit of Independence* to his doctoral thesis entitled *Neutrality as Influenced by the United States*, and finally *The Persecution of Church in Korea* were the three intellectual preoccupations: the conceptualisation of liberty as first and foremost that of exchange; secondly, the practical proposals by which to legislate and institute this liberty, i.e., trade and international law; and finally, the enactment of this historical development via the agency of the United States of America. According to Rhee the spread of interstate commerce illustrates the universality of man's desire to exchange and socialise, and his enthusiasm for the Open Door Policy by the United States reflects this. The international legal regime is the formalisation of this natural human sociability. This, in turn, ensures the preservation of each other. This benevolent regime of exchange captures the spirit behind the global Christian mission movement and international trade regime.

Rhee's overall aim was to frame the concept of liberty within the regime of exchange mandated by the (theologised) natural right and duty to exchange. By linking the natural right to private property with the duty to exchange, Rhee helped establish the concept of liberty as the supreme political virtue. The instruments with which to regulate and govern the morality of the international order

were international trade and international law even at the expense of state sovereignty and territorial inviolability. From the locus of private property and the opposite of slavery, via Rhee, liberty was associated with the idea of natural sociability and commerce.

In view of this, Chosŏn's refusal to partake in the society of nations constituted a case of moral deficiency deserving of sanctions by the foreign powers. And if the international regime of free trade and exchange epitomised the paragon of political enlightenment, at the other end stood Roman Catholicism and Confucianism – the axiomatic model of war, conquest, and isolation. From the perspective of liberty conceived of as the right to exchange, Roman Catholicism and Confucianism were identical in terms of un-freedom and oppression, with the former emblematic of spiritual tyranny and absolutism whilst the latter embodied corrupting isolation. Against this Rhee prescribed the antidote of political Protestantism and with it the Christianising of the future Korea.

Chapter 6 examines the projection of political ideas through the theological prism from 1900 to 1917. Conventionally considered the period of the church de-politicisation, many historians have drawn attention to the top-down missionary efforts to eradicate the nationalist movements. According to this analysis, the foreign missionaries instituted conservative evangelicalism inspired by anti-intellectual, soteriological, and hierarchical concerns. Yet the survey of the Protestant periodicals from 1898 to 1918 reveals not only the contemporaneous endeavours to provide the theological account of the political condition of man, but also the emergent ideology of political Protestantism.

I argue that the intellectual appeal of political Protestantism stemmed not from the collective desire to 'modernise' the nation but rather from the belief that it alone is in possession of the moral resources necessary to free the nation. The epistemic challenges posed by this new system of knowledge, and the chain of reasoning which blended the condition of the soul with the vision of liberty between 1900 and 1918 in the theological caldron are detailed. Central to this growing conviction was the degree to which the universality of Christian epistemic claims was able to confound the Confucian epistemic certitude. As such the most pressing task for the Protestants was

to demonstrate the epistemological tools to analysing the domain to which only Protestantism has privileged access, namely the soul. This gave rise to two questions: the question of history and the moral psychology.

The starting point of the criticism launched by the Protestant theologians asserted that without access to the contents of the divine law, the human laws are subject to corruption over time and Confucianism in Chosŏn was a case in point. The known history of Korea bore witness to this cycle of corruption, a condition to which even the wisest of Confucian legislators were susceptible. In light of this insight, many Christian intellectuals began to perceive Confucianism as the source of corruption, not merely caught up in a cycle of historical vicissitude of rise and fall. But more importantly, the prospective converts could draw little comfort when no systematic explanation was forthcoming as to how Korea had been alienated from this divine knowledge. The implication of this mortified the Koreans as it amounts to effectively condemning the fate of countless ancestors to eternal hellfire.

By way of tackling this ancestral controversy, the Protestant intellectuals settled on 'conscience', a divine gift of innate moral compass by God to those historically who had no access to the Scripture. This in turn underscored the existence of the soul, an immortal entity for which God created conscience. From there on, determining the content of the soul became paramount for the Protestants whose chief task was to clarify how the existence of conscience, the cognition of the external world, and the comprehension of sensory data empirically are reflected in the moral psychology of man.

The long road that connects the concept of the soul to the exercise of liberty could only be traversed through the field of conscience. In contrast to the earlier civic-oriented definitions, the Protestants argued that liberty is an innate cognitive capacity to discern the right from the wrong, a mental intuition that naturally predisposes one's conduct in accordance with the divine positive law. The insistence that liberty *naturally* conforms to the Law is extrapolated from the Biblical episode of the temptation of Adam whose action constituted not freedom but licence. With conscience thus

theorised as the defence against the eternal damnation, liberty is theorised not so much a right or positive entitlement but a natural moral disposition and innate cognitive duty – a gift – to submit to the sovereign authority of God.

Final thought

In this final section I will summarise the findings and address the two main interpretative implications arising from the thesis: the challenges of addressing secularist biases in the consideration of modern political thought on the one hand, and how to examine the history of political ideas embedded in non-western, non-secular contexts on the other. As shown throughout the thesis, the former is not unrelated to the challenges of the latter.

The thesis evaluated the four aspects – historical, political, economic, and theological – relevant to the conceptualisation of the idea of liberty in the period between the 1880s and 1910s. By bringing into sharp focus these contingent factors and multiple contexts the study challenges the received wisdoms of analysis, i.e. social Darwinism, religious nationalism, disenchantment, and state modernisation process. Rather, in drawing attention to these interlocking and overlapping contingencies, the study interrogates the ideological conceptualisation of liberty as a distinctively sectarian accomplishment exclusively available to Protestantism in contrast to Roman Catholicism and neo-Confucianism. Finally, the thesis seeks to clarify the intellectual appeal of Protestant Christianity to contemporary Chosŏn intellectuals. The secularist emphasis that explicates the ideological appeal of contemporary Anglo-American Protestantism in terms of its affinity with modernisation, cultural imperialism, nationalism, capitalism, and other macro-sociological categories

has been predominantly at the expense of investigation into the conceptual aspects of religious sentiments or practices, 'miracles and magic' as one historian called it, in the modern era.⁶¹⁴

This partiality is especially magnified in the non-western contexts where scholars often subsume the local religious episodes under the weighty rubric of modernity in the shape of nation, colonialism, capitalism, and/or science. Observable phenomena such as mass religious hysteria or eschatological revivalism are treated as symptoms for greater structural causes with little consideration of the normative or ideational aspects of particular manifestations.⁶¹⁵ Religion no longer could afford its own explanation, in other words. Compared with the mid-twentieth century certitude of the demise of religion with which many have grown complacent, historians, sociologists, and philosophers express doubts as to whether secularisation may have to be precluded from the category of modernity. From an intellectual historian's perspective the secularist interpretation is deeply wanting because it fails to comprehend the tremendous intellectual sway Christianity in particular and religion in general enjoyed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶¹⁶ The gaping theoretical gap with which to plug the secularisation thesis undoubtedly prompted 'the religious turn of recent in the wider historical literature', which seeks to complicate the simplistic accounts of transnational intellectual exchange from that of that of unidirectional west-to-east, religious-to-secular orientation.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁴ See Jewett, A. (2015). Parsing postwar American rationality. *Modern Intellectual History*. pp.1-2; Thomas, K. (1971). *Religion and the decline of magic*. New York, Scribner, Chapter 22

⁶¹⁵ Most notably, see Geertz, C. (1989). *The religion of Java*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press; Guha, R. (1983). *Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency in colonial India*. Delhi, Oxford; Stokes, E. (1978). *The peasant and the Raj: studies in agrarian society and peasant rebellion in colonial India*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1937). *Witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande*. Oxford, Clarendon Press. From the mass psychology perspective see Cohn, N. (2009). *The pursuit of the millennium: revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the Middle Ages*. New York, Barnes & Noble; Certeau, M. D. (2000). *The possession at Loudun*. Chicago, Ill, Univ. of Chicago Press

⁶¹⁶ See the current assessment in Kosek, J. K. (2016). The spirit of reform: religious ideas and social change in modern America. *Modern Intellectual History*, September; Noll, M. A. (2001). *American evangelical Christianity: an introduction*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, p.196

⁶¹⁷ See Shortall, S. (2016). Lost in translation: religion and the writing of history. *Modern Intellectual History*, v.13, pp.273-286; Anderson, M. L. (1995). The limits of secularisation: on the problem of the Catholic revival in nineteenth-century Germany. *The Historical Journal*, v.38, n.3, pp.647-760; Staudigl, M. & Alvis, J. W. (2016). Phenomenology and the post-secular turn: reconsidering the 'return of the religious'. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, v.24, n.5, pp.589-599

In this thesis I maintain that the ideational resources animating the religious sentiments were located on a conceptual plane not reducible to concerns of anti-colonial nationalism or modern enlightenment values, but intersecting moral and religious issues. Therefore the analytic focus in the thesis has been to highlight the specific manner in which missionaries and converts assembled multiple sets of conceptual resources to expound the epistemic and moral pre-eminence of reformed Christianity. The vein of ideas in the thesis demonstrates how theological considerations facilitated the parsing of political thought.⁶¹⁸ Indeed it was firmly shared by many Korean converts and Americans that only by the full spectrum of knowledge available through Protestant Christianity could one hope to reform public morality. Much as empirical science, Marxist revolution, international law, free trade, political liberalism, or the internet were once heralded as the deliverance of humanity from war, scarcity, and corruption, the Christian missionaries and the Korean converts in question believed that Christian reformed religion would fulfil the salvific promise. This conviction, now implausible to the point of unintelligibility, stands in firm contrast to the conventional wisdom that narrowly examines the history of modern Korean political thought in terms of secular political ideas.

For many scholars, Korean Protestants' scorn of superstitious Buddhists or idolatrous Confucians causes discomfiture precisely on account of their analogous belief that faith in Jesus would dispel demons or cure haemorrhoids. Yet I hasten to reject attempts to call it a calculated opportunism or, worse yet, a form of casuistry. Rather, there is a profitable parallel to be drawn between the seventeenth-century English sceptics who, contemptuous of magic and devotions to holy miracles by rural peasants, preferred a rationalistic theology with voluntaristic dimensions. Likewise, the historical linkage between the articulation of liberty and the Protestant historiography, politics and theology analysed in the thesis is not a call to exorcise this archaic excrescence and migrate onto a

⁶¹⁸ Sin, Y.-H. (1992). *Tongnip Hyŏphoe yŏn'gu: tongnip sinmun, Tongnip Hyŏphoe, Manmin Kongdonghoe ūi sasang kwa undong*. [A study on the Independence Club: ideas and activism on tongnip sinmun, Independence Club, manmin kongdonghoe]. Sŏul T'ŭkpyŏlsi, Ilchogak, p.173; Mun, C.-S. (1998). *Hanmal ūi sŏyang chŏngch'i sasang suyong* [the reception of western political thought in late nineteenth century Korea]. Sŏul, Kyŏngsŏng Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, p.109

more austere theoretical ground without reference to the transcendent. The Christian ideas rooted in the theologico-metaphysical substratum, rather than suffering the irrelevance of disenchantment, have penetrated and permeated the secular world. Just as the medieval concept of the mystical body of Christ had been transported into the terrestrial perpetuity of the state, or the theology of hell into the modern concept of homogenous, empty time⁶¹⁹, one must consider the possibility that at the heart of modern liberal political thought is inscribed the Christian notions of the immortal soul and the divine punitive sanction. Secularisation as such ought to be understood not so much as a fragmentation and banishment as a permeation and percolation of Christianised ideas into our secular world.⁶²⁰ The appropriation and accommodation of Christian ideas in our profane political thought signifies the insinuation and penetration of theological conceptual resources into the conceptual imagination.⁶²¹

The political Protestantism in Korea in this period was an attempt to imagine, with the help of the novel set of ideas supplied by the Protestants, what it means to be free in this world, an arduous endeavour at a time when the moral purchase of liberty was profoundly in question. Yet on this precarious and perilous faith in liberty rested the inextinguishable aspirations for the next kingdom to come, the founding of the Christian nation-state (Kr: 기독교 건국론; C: 基督教建國論) which inspired generations of Korean Protestants.⁶²² Since then, the idea of liberty rooted in the Protestant theological and ecclesiastical imagination has remained integral to the real world of politics in Korea.

⁶¹⁹ For the discussion of medieval concept of time deriving from the concept of hell, see Le Goff, J. (2004). *Your money or your life economy and religion in the middle ages*. New York, N.Y., Zone Books, Chapter 5

⁶²⁰ Kantorowicz, E. H. (1997). *The king's two bodies: a study in medieval political theology*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, p.235; Le Goff book. I am very grateful for Mr Lee Woochang for the point regarding secularisation.

⁶²¹ For a conceptual model as to how one may approach this, see Karpov, V. (2010). Desecularization: a conceptual framework. *Journal of Church and State*, v.52, n.2, pp.232-270; for a more philosophical interpretation see Taylor, C., 2007. *A secular age*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

⁶²² Yi, T.-C. & Chang, K.-S. (2009). Yisŭngman ŭi kidokkyo sinang kwa kukka kŏnsŏllon: kidokkyo kaecheon hu chongkyo hwaltong ŭl chungsim ŭro (1899~1913) [Yisŭngman, Christian faith, and state construction: with the focus on his post-conversion religious activity (1899~1913)]. *Han'guk kidokkyo wa yŏksa*, v.30, pp.35-90; Yi, H.-C. (2009). Hankyŏngjik yŏn'gu ŭi kwanchŏm: kidokkyojŏk kŏnggunnon [A perspective on Han Kyŏng-chic: Christian national founding]. *Han'guk kidokkyo wa yŏksa*, v.30, pp.157-181

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